THE CHILDREN'S BIBLE HOUR

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THE CHILDREN'S BIBLE HOUR

DEBORAH. (See page 36.)

THE

CHILDREN'S BIBLE HOUR

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

Dear Boys and Girls:

Several years have passed since I sent you a book of Bible Stories. I hear that some of you know the old stories very well and that you are ready for a new book. Here it is. But this time I have not written alone, as you will see by reading the title page. Perhaps you already know my friend, Mrs. Harris, for she has written many stories for boys and girls; if not, it gives me pleasure to introduce you to her.

You see that this book is a little larger, and you will find it a little more difficult than my last two books, because I remember that you have grown older.

I think it probable that some of the stories will be entirely new to you. The Bible is so full of interesting stories that it takes a long time to learn them all. You know many Bible names. Let me see—Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samson, Hannah, Esther, David, Solomon, Daniel, and of course you know of Jesus and his disciples, of Paul and of Timothy.

In this new book you will become better acquainted with some of these old friends, and you will also find names which may be altogether new to you, as Ezra, Jeremiah, Hezekiah, Michal, Deborah, Stephen.

How many names there are in the Bible, and every name has a meaning!

I am sure you will want to get well acquainted with these new names. You like to make new friends, do you not? The Bible tells us so much about some of these men and women that we can not write it all upon a single page, but we have found a way to help you learn the whole story. After you have read a story, look at the bottom of

the page and you will see where to find the story in the Bible. Sometimes the same story is told two or three times over in different books of the Bible. You know the Bible is made up of sixty-six small books, all bound together. At first these books were not bound together but each one was kept by itself. Many of the separate books of the Bible are bound alone even now. You can get the book of Psalms, or the book of Proverbs, or the book of Matthew or John. I think you would like to read the Bible in these separate little parts. Perhaps it would not seem such a great task to read the Bible through, one little book at a time. Ask mamma to let you try it. But many of you are not old enough to read all of the Bible yet. There are parts that you could not understand, but I am quite sure you can all read the chapters that we have selected. We hope that you will not forget these Bible Readings.

I need not ask you to look at the pictures; of course you will do that willingly; but will you *study* the pictures? They will tell you many things that can not be written.

A great artist, named Dore, made some of the pictures. He has made many more Bible pictures. I hope you will see them all some time.

This is a very long letter. I must not keep you from the stories and pictures. Good-by, which means, "God be with you."

Your loving friend,

JENNY B. MERRILL.

THE CHILDREN'S BIBLE HOUR—PART I.

JACOB'S VISION.

Have you ever had a very beautiful dream? When I was a little girl, I often wished that I might dream of angels. Perhaps it was because I had read the story of Jacob's dream or vision. I will tell you the story. Jacob had left home to go on a long journey. He had

to walk, for in those days there were no cars or stages. Men traveled very often on camels, but this time Jacob walked, and he was all alone. When night came on, Jacob was still far out in the country away from any house.

The Bible says, "And Jacob went out from Beer-Sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep.

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not."

And he was afraid and said, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel, that is, the house of God.

Was not this a beautiful and comforting dream for Jacob to have when he was far away from home?

Perhaps some day you may be far away from your home in a strange country. God will be near you, and He will send His angels to take charge of you, whether you see them in a vision

or not. Perhaps you may feel "Nearer to God" than ever before, as Jacob did.

There is a very sweet hymn, "Nearer my God to Thee," which speaks of Jacob and his wonderful dream; can you sing it? Here is a part of it:

"Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.

"There let the way appear,
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me,
In mercy given,
Angels to beckon me,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee."

JACOB MEETING ESAU.

Here are two brothers who once had a very bad quarrel. They were Abraham's grandsons. They had not seen each other for twenty years. Jacob, the one with his face hidden, was the most to blame. Esau, the other brother, had a right to his father's blessing as he was the oldest son. But Rebekah, their mother, helped Jacob to cheat his old, blind father, by covering himself with hairy skins. Then Isaac blessed Jacob, thinking he was Esau. Esau was very angry, and said he would kill Jacob. Then Rebekah sent Jacob away to her brother's in Haran. It was a long, lonely journey; but one night God gave Jacob that beautiful dream of the ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven.

The next morning, as Jacob thought of God's promise, he said, "The Lord shall be my God, and I will surely give one-tenth of all God gives me to the Lord." By and by Jacob reached his uncle Laban's, and God blessed him there. Jacob married and had eleven sons. Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee." Yet, even with this promise, Jacob was afraid of Esau. Before he came to the land where Esau lived, he sent messengers with humble words to Esau. The men came back, saying, "We came to thy brother Esau, and he

MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU.

is coming to meet thee with four hundred men. Jacob was sure Esau meant to fight, perhaps to kill him. Jacob prayed very earnestly to God for help. Then he sent men with presents of cattle before him, and then he spent a night in prayer.

The next morning he put his wives and children behind him, so that if there was any fighting, they could get away, and then he went to meet Esau. But Jacob need not have been afraid. Esau ran to meet Jacob and fell on his neck and kissed him. He had brought all his soldiers to honor his brother, not to fight him!

Bible Readings.—Gen. 25 : 27-34; 27 : 1-45; 28; 29: 1-20; 31 : 3-17-18; 32; 33 : 1-17.

THE PLAGUE OF HAIL.

Have you heard of the ten punishments or plagues that were sent to Pharaoh and his people? Do you know why Pharaoh had to be punished so many times? It was because he refused to let the Children of Israel go. They had lived in his country many years and had worked very hard for him. They were his slaves.

At last God sent Moses to lead the Children of Israel back to their old home in Canaan. God sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message, saying, "Let my people go." But Pharaoh answered, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

Pharaoh did not want to lose so many slaves. He wanted more fine buildings and monuments built, like those you see in the picture. He had treated the Children of Israel very cruelly. He had sent men out with lashes to beat them, if they did not work faster and faster. Now God had sent Moses to deliver them, and Pharaoh could not keep them very much longer.

God first punished Pharaoh by turning all the river and ponds of Egypt into blood for seven days. Then frogs were sent; so many that they leaped into the houses, and got into the food and into the

beds. Then came the plagues of lice and of flies; then their cattle died, after this many of the people had boils. In spite of all this punishment, Pharaoh still would not obey. Then came the plague of which we have a picture. It was "the plague of hail." "The Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground, and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt, and the hail smote every tree of the field." Do you know what hail is? It is frozen rain. It is like small lumps of ice.

Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and said, "I have sinned this

THE PLAGUE OF HAIL.

time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail, and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer." But Pharoah did not keep his word, till a far greater punishment was sent.

Bible Readings.—Ex. 7 : 19-25; Chapters 8 to 12.

DEPARTURE OF THE ISRAELITES.

LEAVING EGYPT.

This is a picture of the Israelites leaving Egypt. Would you like to know what made Pharaoh willing that they should leave?

One day Moses told every Jewish family to kill a lamb. He told

each father to take some of the lamb's blood and stain the sides of the door of his house with the blood. Moses said, "The Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when He seeth the blood He will pass over the door, and will not let the destroyer come into your houses to smite you."

The people did as Moses commanded. I do not think the Israelites slept much that night. "And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house in which there was not one dead.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses in the night and told him to take the Israelites away that minute. So they started in the night. Some of them had wet the flour for bread, without leaven, or yeast, in it, but they tied up the dough in their bundles, and when they halted they baked unleavened cakes. Think of the great crowd of people—six hundred thousand, besides children! That night has never been forgotten by the Jews. God told them that when they reached the Promised Land, they were to keep a feast to remember this night. For seven days, every year, they were to eat unleavened bread.

I suppose, as the people ate that unleavened bread in the early morning, after leaving Egypt, they thought, "Next year we will eat it in Canaan—what a feast we shall keep! But they did not obey God, and for forty years they wandered in the wilderness. Only two, of all the men who left Egypt, lived to enter the Promised Land. It was good they did not know what was to happen.

Look at the picture. Have they any horses? How do the mothers carry their babies? Which man is Moses? How did they know which way to go? The Lord went before them, by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire.

Bible Readings.—Ex. Chapters 12-15; Heb. 11 : 23-29.

MOSES COMING DOWN FROM MOUNT SINAI.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

And God spake all these words, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

(1). "Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

(2). "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love me and keep my commandments.

(3). "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

(4). "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

(5). "Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

(6). "Thou shalt do no murder.

(7). "Thou shalt not commit adultery.

(8). "Thou shalt not steal.

(9). "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

(10). "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's."

Jesus put these ten commandments into two:

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

(1). "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

(2). "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

A FATHER TEACHING THE LAW TO HIS CHILDREN.

A FATHER AND HIS CHILDREN.

How much there is to look at in this picture! What do you think the man is talking about? The man is an Israelite, or Jew. He is talking to his children about the word of God. A long, long time ago, Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. God told the

Israelites to teach their children carefully out of the books Moses had written. God said, "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shall teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up."

The Lord says this to all fathers and mothers. Do you like to hear about God's law? Do you like to learn His words? His words are the only ones that are to last forever.

As the years went on, more of the Bible was written; beautiful songs about war for the boys to learn. A song for shepherd boys, and chapters for girls. There is one chapter that every girl among the Israelites learned by heart. It is the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs, beginning at the tenth verse.

Do you see that box by the man's side? That has some of the Bible in it. God's Word was written at first on long sheets of parchment and rolled up. Moses told the Jews they were to bind the Word of God for a sign upon their heads, and let it be as frontlets between their eyes. After Moses died, some of the priests said he meant the people to wear a little box, with a Bible text in it, strapped on their foreheads and on their right arms. A great many wore these boxes. But David understood what Moses really meant. David says, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." We hide words in our hearts when we learn them. Children can learn by heart more easily than older people. I heard an old lady of seventy recite a long chapter. She said, "I learned that chapter when I was ten years old, but I can't remember a word that I have learned since I was forty."

So, while you are young, learn the law of the Lord. It will be a Lamp to your feet and a Guide to your path.

Bible Readings.—Deut. 6: 1-12; Ps. 119: 9-16, 33-35, 103-105; 2 Tim. 3: 15.

THE SETTING UP OF THE TABERNACLE.

SETTING UP THE TABERNACLE.

Do not you like to watch men building a house? Did you ever think that the men have a pattern to go by? One man makes the

pattern, or plan, and another builds the house. Who do you think made the plan for the first house of God? The Lord Himself. It was not a house, but a tent that could be taken to pieces.

When the Israelites were in the wilderness, God showed Moses the pattern of the Tabernacle. Moses was alone with God forty days in Mount Sinai, when he saw the pattern.

The sides of the Tabernacle were made of boards and pillars, the ceiling was of curtains. First an embroiderad linen one, over that one made of fine goat's hair, then one of rams' skins, and on top of all, one of thick leather. The boards and pillars were covered with gold. They fitted into each other. The Tabernacle had no door. Beautiful curtains hung in front. There were no windows; there were two great candle-sticks or lamp-stands in the Tabernacle. Each candle-stick had six lamps. These lamps were kept burning day and night.

Far inside the Tabernacle there was a very beautiful curtain, or vail. Only the High Priest could go behind that vail. The Ark was kept behind it. There was a small altar of incense in front of the vail, and a table of shew-bread. Twelve fresh loaves were put on this table every Sabbath.

A large court was marked off all around the Tabernacle, fenced in by brass pillars with curtains hanging between them. Do you see something that looks like a fountain? That is the brazen laver, where the priests washed their hands and feet. How do you think they got the brass for it? Every woman who had a looking-glass of polished brass, gave it to be melted for the laver. Near the outside of the court stood the great brazen altar, where the priests offered sacrifice morning and evening.

At last, in the second year, on the first day of the month, all was done. The Tabernacle was set up, and the court inclosed with curtains. Then a cloud covered the tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.

Bible Readings.—Ex. 35 : 4-35 ; 39 : 32-43 ; 40 : 1-38.

BEARING BACK THE GRAPES OF ESHCOL.

GRAPES OF ESHCOL.

When the Israelites had left Egypt and were near Canaan, the Lord said to Moses, "Send thou men that they may search the land

of Canaan, *which I give unto the children of Israel.*" Twelve of the chief men were chosen, and Moses said to them, "See the land what it is and the people that dwell therein; and be ye of good courage and bring of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes.

The twelve men searched the land of Canaan for forty days, and then they came back, bringing a great branch with a cluster of grapes on it. See how big the grapes look!

The men told Moses and all the listening people, "We came to the land, and it is a rich, beautiful land; this is the fruit of it. But the people are strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great."

But two of the twelve men, named Caleb and Joshua, talked very differently. Caleb said, "Let us go up at once and take the land, for we are well able to overcome it."

But the other ten men said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. We saw giants in the land, and we seemed no bigger than grasshoppers by the side of the great tall men."

Then all the Israelites cried out and begged to go back to Egypt. They said, "We will die by the sword and our wives and children will perish." But Joshua and Caleb said, "The land which we passed through is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, He will bring us into this land and give it us. The Lord is with us, have no fear of the people."

But the Israelites wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb! Then the glory of the Lord appeared before all the children of Israel! And God told the Israelites that not one of the grown people should go into Canaan, except Caleb and Joshua. All the rest must die in the wilderness, but the children, after forty years, should go in and possess the land.

Bible Readings.—Numbers, Chapters 13, 14.

FLEEING TO THE CITY OF REFUGE.

FLEEING TO THE CITY OF REFUGE.

Have you ever heard of the six cities of refuge? These cities were in the land of Canaan, which God gave to the children of Israel

after they had wandered so many years in the wilderness. A refuge is a place of safety, and a "city of refuge" was a city in which a man could run and be safe, if some one wanted to kill him.

In the picture you see the gate of one of the six cities of refuge.

Ancient cities were often surrounded by walls; this city has a wall, and the gate is in the wall.

The elders of the city have come out to meet this man who has been running many miles, perhaps, to save his life. You see one of the elders is raising his hand as if to stop the man who has the sword.

He can not kill the man now with his sword, because he has reached "a city of refuge."

You may wonder why he wished to kill him.

The man who ran away, had killed a brother of the man with the sword.

Perhaps, then, he deserves to die; but it is not right to kill him until the judges find out whether he did it in anger, or whether it was only an accident.

It may be that this man went out into the woods with a neighbor to cut down a tree. The head of the axe may have slipped off and struck the neighbor, so that he died.

If that is the way it happened, would it be right to put him to death? Certainly not; then the elders of this city of refuge will let him live in their city so that he will be safe.

Now you can understand why the Lord told Moses to appoint six cities of refuge. It was in order that a man who had killed his neighbor accidentally might not be put to death, and that every man should have a fair trial.

It was not intended to save a man from death if he had willingly killed any one, for God has said, "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." "He that killeth any man shall surely be put to death."

But you know that there is a great difference between hurting your little sister or brother accidentally, or doing it *on purpose*.

Sometimes it is hard to tell whether a man kills another on purpose or by accident ; but it is always right to inquire very carefully. In our country, we have a jury of twelve men appointed to decide. They take a long time to decide, so as not to make a mistake.

They never take the man's life unless they are sure he did kill *on purpose.*

A man should never be put to death in haste as this man with the sword wants to do it.

These are the names of the six cities of refuge :

They appointed Kedesh in Galilee in Mount Naphtali, and Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

And on the other side Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain, out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.

If you have a Bible with a map of the tribes, you can easily find them.

The man always ran to the nearest city of refuge. You will see that they were nearly equally distant.

Bible Readings.—Deut. 19: 1-13; Num. 35; 9-34; Josh. 20: 1-9. Ps. 46.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE.

The year of Jubilee was a very happy time for the children of Israel. When it began, the people blew trumpets as you see this man doing. The Lord gave the people the year of Jubilee just as He gives us all good years.

God told Moses that after the children of Israel reached Canaan, every fiftieth year should be a year of Jubilee. I suppose you want to know why the children of Israel were so glad in this year. God told Moses that in the year of Jubilee, every one who was a slave, or who was in prison, should be set free.

Every man was to be allowed to go to his own home; for if he had sold it, or it had been taken away for debt, it was to be returned. God said that the year of Jubilee should be a year of rest, even the land should be allowed to rest, as if it were a Sabbath for the land. What do you think God meant by letting the land rest? He meant that the farmers must not dig it, nor sow seed in it. They must not even cut their grape-vines.

But often grains and fruit grow out of the ground without having been planted by a farmer. The farmers were not to gather even such food, but leave it for the poor, and for strangers.

When the time came, the priests blew the trumpets first, and then up and down the hills, all over the land of Canaan, the people joined in making the joyful sounds.

This all happened long before the first Christmas Day. Still, I think it was something like Christmas. When next Christmas comes, and you hear so many children blowing trumpets, you must think of the old Jubilee Year of the children of Israel. Then you must think of the good news of our Christmas trumpets and our Christmas bells. It is this: "Unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

Jesus has made every year a Jubilee Year for us by coming to live on our earth.

Bible Readings.—Lev. 25: 1-55; Luke, 2: 8-20; Luke, 4: 16-21.

JERICHO, THE WALLED CITY.

I wonder if you have ever seen a city with a wall all around it. Some old cities have walls, but there are none in this country. The walls were built to keep out robbers, and wild animals, and other enemies. Many of them were made so thick that people could drive in their carriages on the top.

Canaan, the land the Lord had promised to the Israelites had great walled cities in it, full of tall soldiers. Jericho, the city you see in the picture, was one of the great cities of Canaan ; yet the soldiers in Jericho were very much frightened when they saw the Israelites marching toward them. They had heard how the Israelites had crossed the Jordan, how the priests, with the ark on their shoulders (you can see them in the picture) had stepped into the river. As the priests' feet touched the river, the waters rolled back, and left a dry path. Then the priests marched to the middle of the river, and stood there while the Israelites crossed over. The priests came last, and then the waters rolled back.

The people of Jericho trembled as they thought of all this, but the Israelites did not rush at the walls, nor try to fight. They walked quietly once around the city. Those men with rams' horns marched in front. How many horns are there? Next came the priests with the ark, and then, quite silently, marched all the fighting men. This was done once every day for six days. The people of Jericho began to feel less afraid. Perhaps they laughed at the Israelites.

The seventh day the people of the city must have wondered still more. The Israelites walked around the walls seven times! And the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city." Then the Israelites shouted, and the priests blew with the trumpets, and it came to pass that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, and they took the city.

Bible Readings.—Joshua 1 : 1-8, 14-17 ; Joshua 3 : 1-17 ; 4 : 1-12 ; Joshua 4 : 20-24 ; 6 : 1-20;

FALLING DOWN OF THE WALLS OF JERICHO.

THE CAPTURE OF AI.

Have you heard that all the silver and gold in Jericho was to be given to the Lord? The Israelites were forbidden to keep any of it. After Jericho had been taken, there was another city, called Ai, to be taken. The men who went to see Ai, said to Joshua: "Do not send all the people. Two or three thousand men can take Ai." So three thousand Israelites went to take the city. But when the men of Ai chased them, the Israelites were frightened and ran away. Joshua knew then that the Lord was not helping the Israelites. So Joshua fell down on his face before the ark. He prayed all day, saying: "O God, why hast thou brought us over Jordan to destroy us?" and the Lord said to Joshua: "Get thee up. Israel can not stand before the heathen, because a great wrong has been done. I will show you who has done the wrong."

The next day Joshua called the twelve tribes out and the Lord took the tribe of Judah. Then each family of the tribe was called and the Lord took the family of Zarhites. Then each man in that family was called, and the Lord took Achan. Then Joshua said to Achan: "My son, give glory to the Lord. Confess your sin. Tell me now what thou hast done."

Achan said: "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord. When I saw a goodly garment, and silver and gold, I coveted them and took them. They are hid in the earth in the middle of my tent." Then Joshua took Achan to the valley of Achor; and Achan was stoned to death. Achan was punished to teach us how wicked it is to take what belongs to God. Remember Achan's sin began by wishing for what did not belong to him. We must ask the Lord to keep our wishes right.

After Achan was punished, the Lord fought on Israel's side. Then the Israelites went to the city of Ai. That is Joshua standing with the spear in his hand. Do you see the city of Ai burning? Do you see one end of the ark? Read in the Bible about the battle.

Bible Readings.—Joshua, Chapter 6: 18-19; 7; 8: 1-29.

THE CAPTURE OF AI.

DEBORAH.

When the Israelites reached Canaan, the Lord told them to have nothing to do with the heathen. But, instead of obeying God, the Israelites married heathen wives, and they learned to worship idols. Then the Lord let enemies trouble the Israelites. They were greatly distressed. But the Lord raised up judges, wise men who helped the Israelites, just as General Grant and President Lincoln helped us. For four hundred and twenty years the Lord kept sending these wise men to judge and help the people. One judge was a woman, named Deborah. In her time the Lord gave Israel into the hand of Jabin, King of Canaan. The captain of Jabin's army was a great man, named Sisera. He had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he oppressed the Israelites.

Then Deborah sent for Barak, a Jewish soldier. She told Barak that God wished him to take ten thousand men to Mount Tabor. "I will draw Sisera unto thee," God promised, "with his chariots and people, and I will deliver him into thine hand."

Barak said to Deborah, "If thou wilt go with me, I will go." "I will go with thee," said Deborah, "for the Lord will let a woman take Sisera." So they went up to Mount Tabor, and Sisera came after them with all his chariots and hosts of men. The Lord fought for Israel, so they conquered.

Sisera jumped out of his chariot and ran away. He went to the tent of a woman named Jael; Jael's husband was Sisera's friend, so Sisera thought Jael would hide him. But Jael thought it was her duty to kill the enemy of Israel. So, after Sisera had gone to sleep in her tent, she took a nail of the tent and took a hammer in her hand, and smote it into his temple, and fastened it into the ground, for he was fast asleep and weary. So Sisera died.

Many women have helped their people in war times. But how much better it will be when there is no more war! Then all nations will love and help one another.

Bible Readings.—Judges, Chapters 4 and 5; Is. 2 : 1-5.

SISERA MEETING JAEL AT THE TENT.

SAMSON.

About three hundred years after Joshua died, the Israelites were very wicked. So the Lord let some people called Philistines rule over them for forty years. An Israelite named Manoah, lived at that time. He and his wife loved the Lord. One day the angel of the Lord told them their little baby-boy should help the Israelites fight the Philistines. Manoah called his boy Samson. Samson grew up to be the strongest man in the world.

The Philistines said the Israelites must give Samson to them. So three thousand Israelites went to Samson and said, "We must tie you up and give you to the Philistines." Samson let them tie him with two new strong cords and give him to the Philistines. But when the Philistines shouted against Samson, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson, and he broke the strong new cords like threads. Then he picked up the jaw-bone of an ass and killed a thousand men with it.

Another time Samson was asleep in a city called Gaza. The Philistines knew it ; so they locked the great iron gates of Gaza. They meant to unlock the gates very early, and creep in and kill Samson. But in the middle of the night Samson picked up the gates and carried them off. Do you see how big one gate is?

But Samson forgot the Lord. So the Lord let a Philistine woman cut off Samson's hair, and then he was no stronger than any other man. The Philistines took Samson, put out his eyes and made him work in the prison. But Samson prayed, and, as his hair grew his strength came back. One day the Philistines made a great feast in honor of their idol. They sent for Samson, and made fun of him as the boy led him into the temple. They set Samson between two great pillars that held up the second story of the temple. The place was crowded, there were thousands of people there. Then Samson prayed. I wish you would learn his prayer. "Oh Lord, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee." Then Samson took hold of the two pillars and bent over and he pulled the great temple down. So he died.

Bible Readings.—Judges, 13 : 2-14 ; 15 : 9-17 ; 16 : 1-31.

SAMSON BEARING AWAY THE GATES.

DAVID AND MICHAL.

Who do you think that man is? Is that the way you get out of a house? That man was once a shepherd boy. He killed a great giant and became a captain in the king's army. Yes, that is David. His wife is helping him out of the window. Her name is Michal. Saul, the first king of Israel, was Michal's father.

After David killed Goliath, Saul let David marry his daughter Michal. But Saul soon began to hate David. Saul knew the Lord was going to make another man king instead of him. He began to think the Lord would make David king. When he heard the people praising David, he was jealous and hated David more and more. David used to play on his harp for Saul. One day, as David was playing, Saul threw a spear at him to kill him. David jumped one side and escaped. Then Saul sent men to watch David's house. Saul meant to have David killed in the morning.

Then Michal said to David: "If you do not save your life to-night, to-morrow you will be killed." So Michal let David down from the window and he went away. Then Michal took an image and covered it up, so it looked as if a man lay in the bed. When Saul sent for David, Michal said: "David is sick." Saul told the men to see David. Michal had to let the men into the bed-room, and they found only an image in the bed. Saul was angry that David was safe. How often Michal must have thought of that night when her husband escaped by the window! Years after Michal lived a quiet, peaceful life in Jerusalem.

Jonathan, David's great friend, was Michal's brother. David is called the sweet singer of Israel. Many of the Psalms were written by him. Read the twenty-third Psalm, and the thirty-seventh. That Psalm teaches us not to fret. David says: "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him." That is what David did. He could have killed Saul, but he waited patiently, and at last Saul died, and David was crowned king of Israel.

Bible Readings.—I. Sam. 15 : 11-28 ; 16 : 1-13, 19-23 ; 17 and 18 : 1-16, 20-30 ; 19 : 20 ; 24 : 1-22 ; Psalms, 23, 37, 91.

THE ESCAPE OF DAVID THROUGH THE WINDOW.

ELIJAH'S PRAYER.

It was much harder to believe in God before Jesus came and lived on the earth. So God did wonderful things to help the people believe on Him. This picture shows us one of the ways in which the Lord helped the Israelites to believe in the true God.

The Israelites had a wicked king who worshiped an idol called Baal. King Ahab kept four hundred and fifty prophets to offer sacrifices to Baal. Almost all of the Israelites worshiped the idol, and a prophet named Elijah was the only man that stood up boldly for the true God. Elijah never forgot that he was all the time in God's sight.

One time Elijah stood before King Ahab and said, "Let us see who is the true God. Let the prophets of Baal put a bullock on an altar, but put no fire near; I will put a bullock on an altar and put no fire near. Then let your priests pray to Baal, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The God that answers by fire, let him be God." And all the people answered, "It is well spoken."

Elijah let the prophets of Baal try first. They put a bullock on an altar and then cried out to Baal from morning until noon. But there was no answer. Elijah could not help saying, "Cry aloud; either he is walking or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be waked."

Then, at the hour of evening prayer, Elijah took twelve stones and built an altar and put wood on it. He dug a ditch all around the altar, and laid the bullock on the wood. Then he told the people to pour four barrels of water on the bullock. They did this three times till the ditch was full of water. Then Elijah prayed, "Lord, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel."

Then the fire of the Lord fell and burnt up the bullock, and the wood and even licked up the water. Can you see the other altar?

Remember, "this God is our God." He hears our prayers. Let us not forget that we are standing before Him, just as Elijah said.

Bible Readings.—I Kings, Chapters 17 and 18; II Kings, 2: 1-16.

ELIJAH ON CARMEL.

"GO TO THE ANT, THOU SLUGGARD; CONSIDER HER WAYS, AND BE WISE.—PROV. VI. 6.

A LESSON FROM THE ANT.

Here is a man who does not want to work. He is not sick. See his strong arms and legs! Why did he go to sleep when there was so much work to be done? You can see by the picture that it is harvest-time; the wheat is ripe and ought to be cut down.

I will tell you why this man is sleeping instead of working. *He is lazy.*

Do you know of any busy little creatures that might teach this man a lesson? I think it would do him good to watch the little ants running hither and thither, gathering all the food they can find.

Have you ever watched the little ant-hills by the road or in a garden?

Ants build wonderful houses under-ground. They store away food for the winter.

The ant is a very brave little creature. I have seen it try to carry a load bigger than itself. I am sure this man never had to work harder than that. Wise King Solomon wrote these words in the Bible to all who are like this lazy man. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise."

If this man sleeps when he ought to work, he will soon become poor.

"O, we may get weary,
And think work is dreary;
'Tis harder by far
To have nothing to do."

I hope you are not a lazy child. God is not pleased to have us waste our time. Time is so precious that some one has said, "God only gives it to us by *seconds*."

I will tell you an old fable about "The Grasshopper and the Ant."

A grasshopper that had sung all summer, grew very hungry when winter came. It had not stored away any food. So the grasshopper went to the ant to beg for some wheat.

"What did you do all summer?" asked Mrs. Ant.

"O, I sang to please the people," said Mrs. Grasshopper.

"Very well," said Mrs. Ant. "Now you can dance."

It was not a very kind answer, but I think it may teach us all a lesson. It is the same lesson Paul teaches us, "That if any would not work, neither should he eat."

Bible Readings.—II. Thes. 3: 10; Prov. 6: 6-11; 10: 4-5; 12: 24; 13: 4; 22: 29; 24: 30-34; 27: 23-27; Job 12: 7-8; Rom. 12: 11.

HEZEKIAH CLEANSING THE TEMPLE.

Do you see a king in this picture? He is talking about that pole that his servants are carrying out. What is twined around the pole?

The king's name is Hezekiah. He was a very good king. The Bible says he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. The very first year that Hezekiah was king, he had the temple cleansed. This was the beautiful temple which King Solomon had built. Wicked kings who worshiped idols, had let the temple be neglected. More than one hundred years before, a young king, named Joash, had repaired the temple, but even Joash worshiped idols when he grew old. Then for more than one hundred years the kings and people had neglected God's temple. They had even made an idol of something that Moses had made long, long before. Do you remember why it was that Moses made a serpent of brass? The pole with the serpent twined around it had been kept for nearly seven hundred years. The people made an idol of it; they burnt incense before it. So when Hezekiah had the temple cleansed, he made his servants drag out the brazen serpent and break it; he said, "It is only a piece of brass."

Then, when the temple was cleansed, Hezekiah called the people together to keep the Passover Feast. The king sent posts, or letters, from city to city, and asked all to come. Some of the people laughed at, and mocked the king's messengers, but many came to Jerusalem. Hezekiah prayed himself for the people, and the children of Israel kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness. Then they were so happy that they kept the feast seven days longer. Hezekiah and the princes gave plenty of meat to the poor people.

After this feast the people went home, and the first thing they did was to destroy all the groves and altars where they used to worship idols. Read about Hezekiah's sickness and how he was cured. I am sorry to say this good king had a very bad son named Manasseh. But Hezekiah's prayers were heard, for before Manasseh died, he repented.

Bible Readings.—II Kings, 18: 1-16; II Chron., 30: 1-27; I Kings, 5, and 6: 37-38; Num., 21: 4-10.

HEZEKIAH CLEANSING THE TEMPLE.

THE RECHABITES.

The man who is standing alone by the table in this picture, is a prophet named Jeremiah.

He suffered very much ; again and again he was put into prison. The king of Judah wanted Jeremiah to say one thing, and God told Jeremiah to say quite another thing. Jeremiah obeyed God, and then the king put him in prison.

But every one knew that Jeremiah was a prophet of the Lord, so the king after a time let him go free. As soon as Jeremiah was free, he tried to teach the people their duty. The people had disobeyed so often that God had said they should be sold as slaves, and go far away to a strange land. Jeremiah begged them to obey God; but no, they would not, so the great king of the Chaldeans came with his great army to make slaves of the Jews.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Chaldeans, thought he was fighting the Jews, and burning their homes and villages, just because he wanted to.

But he could not have hurt the Jews unless God had let him. Jeremiah knew this, and he said to the people, "Though you had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent and burn the city with fire."

So you see it was not merely because the Chaldeans were so strong that they conquered.

Do not think that God did not love His disobedient children. Your parents love you even when you disobey them. So God is always a loving Father, even when He punishes.

The people in the small towns and villages thought they would be safe if they could get into the city of Jerusalem, which had a strong wall all around it, and was on a high hill. There were some strange people who lived in tents, called Rechabites ; they became frightened and came with their tents into the city. They pitched their tents in the streets and open places. I am sure the Jewish boys used to stand

around the tents to watch them. One day Jeremiah came to the Rechabites and asked some of them to come to a room with him. When they were in the room, he set wine before them and asked them to drink. But they said, "We will drink no wine." They told Jeremiah that long ago, they had promised Jonadab, the son of Rechab, their father, that they would never drink wine, or build houses, or have farms.

OBEDIENCE OF THE RECHABITES.

Jeremiah thought this would be a lesson of obedience to the Jews. He stood among the people outside the temple, and said, "Listen to the words from the Lord, 'I have sent unto you all my servants, the prophets, but you hearkened not unto me. These men have obeyed an earthly father; why will you not obey a Heavenly Father?'"

Bible Readings.—Jer., 35th Chapter.

JEREMIAH.

JEREMIAH.

Have you ever seen this man before, whom they are pulling up out of the pit?

It is Jeremiah. Some of the Jewish princes were very angry with Jeremiah. The prophet had told the people to give up the city

to the Chaldeans. The princes thought the people ought to fight the Chaldeans, so they asked the king to kill Jeremiah.

The king would not kill the prophet, but he let the princes put Jeremiah into a pit. There was no water in the pit, but it was very muddy, and the poor man sank into the mire.

The princes wanted to let Jeremiah starve to death in the pit, but Jeremiah was in God's hands in the pit as well as when he was free to walk alone. Perhaps he remembered how another of God's children was thrown into a pit. Do you know whom I mean?

A man who loved Jeremiah went and told the king how cruelly the princes had treated the prophet, and at last the king told Ebed-melech to take thirty men and drag Jeremiah out of the pit. In the picture the king seems to be watching them, as they pull Jeremiah up. See how angry that man in the corner looks! Perhaps he is one of the wicked princes. Perhaps the man by the king is Ebed-melech.

This king's name was Zedekiah. Jeremiah had told him again and again that he had better give himself and his city to the Chaldeans. The Lord meant the Chaldeans to conquer the Jews. But Zedekiah would not believe the prophet, and at last as the Chaldeans broke into the city at one gate, Zedekiah ran off through another gate. But the Chaldeans soon caught up with the king. They took him to Nebuchadnezzar, and then they killed Zedekiah's two sons before him.

Was not that sad enough? But then they put out Zedekiah's eyes, and drove him in chains to Babylon. Jeremiah did not go to Babylon. The Chaldeans left a very few of the poorest Jews to live in Judea.

The Chaldeans were very kind to Jeremiah; they told him to do just as he liked, and he chose to stay with the poor people. He hoped they would at last listen to God's word.

But they did not. They disobeyed God just as before. The Bible does not tell us any thing more about Jeremiah. Some say he died in peace, an old man; others say the Jews stoned him to death.

Bible Readings.—Jer., Chapters 37 and 38; II Kings, 24: 17-20; 25: 1-17; II Chron., 36: 11-21.

DANIEL.

Do you think you have ever seen a picture of this man before? I am quite sure you have. Only in the other picture he was standing or sitting among lions. Yes, you know that this man is Daniel. Daniel was born in Jerusalem. His father was a rich prince. Perhaps he was one of those princes that did not believe Jeremiah's warning. But I am sure Daniel had a good mother, for he had learned to love and obey God when a boy. While Daniel was quite young, the king of Babylon came and took all the Jews to serve and work for him. King Nebuchadnezzar told his officers to choose only the brightest boys among the Jews, and bring them up to serve their new country. These boys were put in a school. Then they were given new names, to try to make them forget their own people and their native land. They had food and wine sent to them from the king's table. Daniel was one of the boys that was chosen, and three of his friends were in the school with him. Daniel "purposed in his heart" not to eat the rich food from the king's table, nor to drink the wine. He ate plain vegetable food and drank water. He grew fairer and healthier than those who ate from the king's table. I dare say some of the boys made fun of Daniel, but he "dared to do right." Daniel lived seventy years in Babylon. He became a great prince, and four different kings all honored him. It was not a king who wanted him thrown into the den of lions, but some jealous princes. But I want you to remember one thing about Daniel; he thought very little about Daniel, and he thought a great deal about God. The book in the Bible which this great man wrote is called the "Book of Daniel," but it tells very little of him; it is full of thoughts of God and promises from God. You know if you hold your hand up in front of your eyes, you can shut out the great sun. So if your heart is full of thoughts about yourself you hide the Lord from you. Another thing you can learn from the story of Daniel is, that if we want to do great things for God, we ought to begin when we are young.

Bible Readings.—Dan. 1 : 1-21 ; 6 : 1-28.

DANIEL.

EZRA AND THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

I know a Sunday School where they begin the school in a strange way. The teacher stands on a platform and slowly opens her Bible. As she opens the Bible, every child stands up. This picture tells you about the first man who opened his class that way. The man's name was Ezra. He lived about five hundred years before Christ. Ezra was a Jewish teacher and writer. Ezra was such a good man that even the heathen king respected and loved him. This king let Ezra take a great many of the Jews back to Jerusalem, and the king gave Ezra all the help he needed. Jerusalem was burnt and broken down, but Ezra and his friends built it again. After the people were settled they wanted to hear the Word of God. Do you think each one had a Bible in his house? Oh no; there were only two or three copies of parts of the Old Testament. These copies were very precious, and only a few people knew how to read them. Ezra was the one who knew best how to read and explain the book. So the people asked him to have a great meeting, and read to them. And Ezra read from the book of the law of the Lord, from the morning until the mid-day. Ezra read out in the street. He stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people), and when he opened it, all the people stood up, and Ezra blessed the Lord the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. Then he said unto them, "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Then the people kept a kind of Thanksgiving feast. For seven days they all lived in little houses made of branches of trees, "every one on the roof of his house, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the streets." And there was very great

gladness. Also every day Ezra read in the book of the law of God. I think this must have been a kind of camp-meeting, do not you?

EZRA READING THE LAW IN THE HEARING OF THE PEOPLE.

Perhaps your teacher in Sunday School would like to hear of this way to open school.

Bible Readings.—Ezra 7: 1, 6-28; 8: 15-36; Neh. 8: 1-18.

ANCIENT ORIENTAL VINEYARD.

ANCIENT ORIENTAL VINEYARD.

A vineyard is a place where grape-vines grow.

The grapes are now ripe and the men are gathering them to make wine.

The three men under the little shed are in the wine-press. The wine-press is full of grapes, and these men are treading on them so as to press out the sweet juice. This sweet juice will be very good to drink while it is fresh. But soon it will begin to spoil. I will tell

what will happen. The juice will begin to "work," or ferment as it is called. Little bubbles will rise to the surface. This shows the wine is spoiling and is no longer fit to drink. Have you ever heard what happens when wine ferments? A very poisonous liquid called *alcohol* forms in the wine. No one puts the alcohol in; the sugar decays and changes partly into this poison.

You know nothing is fit to eat or drink after it has begun to decay.

But strange to say, many people like the wine better after the alcohol is formed in it. They say it makes them feel bright and merry and helps them to forget their troubles. But "wine is a mocker;" that is, it deceives people, for the real truth is, that wine and every other drink that contains alcohol, bring sorrow, and sickness, and death, instead of driving them away. Wise King Solomon wrote, "Who hath sorrow? *They that tarry long at the wine.*" Then he gives us this wise counsel:

"Look not upon the wine while it is red; at last it biteth like a serpent."

A wise mother told her son Lemuel, not to drink wine because it might make him "forget the law." That is just what wine does in our country, and the prisons are full of men and women who drank and then forgot to obey the law. A man who drinks, often forgets to work, so that soon his wife and little children have not enough clothes to wear, nor food to eat, nor fire to keep them warm. Some one who doesn't drink has to go and help them.

A little boy who calls himself "a temperance boy," asked me in a letter, "Which is the worst liquor?" I told him brandy, whisky, rum, and gin, because they have the most alcohol in them; but every drink that has any alcohol in it is *poisonous*. We have no right to poison these wonderful body-houses that God has made for us to live in!

Set a watch at the door of your house (your lips) and let no alcohol pass it! When you are a little older, I want you to read a very interesting book called "The Man Wonderful in the House Beautiful."

Bible Readings.—Prov. 23 : 29-35; I Cor. 6 : 19-20.

JESUS TEACHING BY THE SEA-SIDE.

TEACHING BY THE SEA-SIDE.

I have been looking at this picture for a long time. It will do you good to just sit and look, and think of Him who sits with lifted hand, talking to the people. Think! "Never man spake like this man."

Think again ! Where did Jesus come from ? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." "He went about doing good." He talked to the people in the streets, and by the sea-side. He told them stories. His stories meant so much that great wise men could think, and think about them. Yet little children loved the stories and could understand them. This picture tells us about the time in Jesus' life when so many people came to listen to Him, that He had to sit in a boat while the people stood around the shore. He told them parables ; that means, He told them earthly stories that had heavenly meanings. He told them that beautiful day about a sower. Perhaps as Jesus looked up to the hillside behind the crowd of people, He saw a man sowing seed. So He told them of a man going out to sow seed, and how much of his seed went to waste. Some of it was picked up by the birds before it had time to grow at all ; some seed seemed sown all right, for it came up, but the ground was stony and the little roots could not get down to the cool, moist earth ; so the seed died. Some seed fell among weeds and thorns ; though the seed did its best to grow, the thorns grew faster and faster, till the seed was choked.

Perhaps as the children looked up in Jesus' face, they wondered that He seemed to care so much about the little seeds. His voice grew very sad, as He told about the choking thorns and the stony ground. But then, even the babies saw the beautiful smile that came, and the glad light in those loving eyes as Jesus said, "But others fell into good ground and brought forth fruit."

Would you not like to sit close to Jesus and hear a story from His lips ? Let me tell you a way to hear Him. Go alone by yourself and close your eyes. Think of Jesus and remember that He said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," and then take your Bible and read some of Jesus' stories. I think it will seem as if Jesus himself were teaching you.

One of Jesus' names is, "The Word"—so that He does speak to you when you read "The Word," whether it seems so or not.

Bible Readings.—Matt. 13 : 1-23 ; Mark 4 : 1-20 ; Luke 8 : 4-15.

"I WILL, BE THOU CLEAN."

"I WILL, BE THOU CLEAN."

It was not only the strong, well happy people that came to Jesus to hear His words, or receive His blessing. No, indeed; the lame, the blind, and the sick came; some of them afraid to speak to Him, but just touching the hem of His garment. Some of them were not able to walk, but were carried by their friends, and one poor man who could not

walk, and who had no friends—how do you think he reached Jesus? Why, Jesus came to him, and made him well and strong! But there was one man who heard of Jesus, and longed to see Him. This man had a horrible skin disease; he was a leper. The priest forbade a leper to go inside any town, or to come near any person. Every leper had to keep crying out, "Unclean, unclean," as he walked, and when the people heard that cry, they took great care to keep away from the poor leper. The lepers lived in caves in the hill-side, or in huts. No one could go near them even with food, but left it at a distance on the ground for the leper to get. It seldom happened that a leper got well.

This leper had heard how hundreds of years before, a prophet of God had cured Naaman of leprosy.

He heard Jesus called "The Prophet of Nazareth," and he thought, "Oh, if I could but speak to Him!"

At last, one day just at evening-time, this poor leper saw crowds and crowds of people all going one way. Perhaps some kind woman told him, "We are going to the Prophet of Nazareth. He heals all who come to him." And later the leper met them coming back—the lame were leaping and praising God, the blind could see.

"Jesus did it all," he heard; "I will speak to him; He can make even a leper clean," thought the poor man.

Very, very early the next morning, "a great while before day," Jesus waked and went alone to pray. His disciples came and told Him that all men were seeking Him. Then Jesus said they would walk along the road to the next town. And there on the road the leper came. He forgot to cry, "Unclean, unclean;" he only thought of Jesus. He did not notice how the people shrank back, for Jesus came straight on! And kneeling down almost fainting from hope and yet fear, the leper cried, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!"

See how the people start back as Jesus stoops and touches the leper! Then in loving tones, He says, "I will, be thou clean," and that instant the leper was well.

Bible Readings.—Ex. 23 : 14-16; Lev. 23 : 39-44; John 7.

JESUS AND THE SABBATH.

At that season, Jesus went on the Sabbath-day through the corn-fields ; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck ears of corn, and to eat.

But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, " Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath. But he said, " Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him ; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat ? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath-day the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless ? But I say unto you, that *One greater than the temple is here.*

" But if you had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless. *For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.*"

And he departed thence, and went into their synagogue : and behold, a man having a withered hand. And they asked him, " Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day ? " And he said unto them, " What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out ? "

Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath-day. Then saith He to the man, " Stretch forth thy hand." And he stretched it forth ; and it was restored whole, as the other. But the Pharisees took counsel against him, how they might destroy him. And Jesus perceiving it, withdrew from thence ; and many followed him ; and he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him known : that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah, the prophet, saying—

" Behold, my servant whom I have chosen ;
My beloved, in whom my soul is well-pleased :
I will put my spirit upon him,
And he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles,
And in His name shall the Gentiles trust."

Bible Readings.— Math. 12 : 1-21 ; Luke 6 : 1-12 ; Math. 7 : 1-5 ; Mark 2 : 23-28 ; 3 : 1-6 ; Levit. 24 : 5-9.

JESUS AND THE SABBATH.

"YOUNG MAN I SAY UNTO THEE, ARISE!"

THE WIDOW OF NAIN.

What do you think these people are doing? Some look very glad, but some have their faces hidden as if they were crying. They are crying for joy.

Jesus had been staying in a city called Capernaum. After heal-

ing the servant of a rich man, He took the road that led to a little village called Nain. Jesus was not alone. What twelve men were with Him? But besides His disciples, a great many people followed Him to hear Him talk. Perhaps they hoped He would do something wonderful.

Now when Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man being carried out. He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city were with her. So these people met the people who were coming to the city with Jesus. The poor mother walked just in front of her dead son, and I think Jesus walked in front of the people who were with Him. The mother was weeping, for this was her only son. I don't think she saw Jesus. At any rate she did not expect any comfort from Him. But Jesus spoke to the poor mother. He said, "Weep not," and then He touched the bier or coffin, and they that bare it stood still.

The crowd that were with Jesus felt sure He was going to help the poor mother. Jesus had not called any dead person back to the earth before, so no one knew He would raise the dead. But they knew He was able to do a great deal. They knew He loved to help any one who was in trouble.

But the crowd who had come with the poor mother—what do you think they thought? They wondered Jesus dared to touch the coffin, for they had been taught that a dead body was unclean. Perhaps some felt a little cross to be stopped in the hot sunshine. But in a moment they all learned what Jesus could do. He said, "Young man, I say unto thee arise." And he that was dead sat up and began to speak.

Do you see the mother at Jesus' feet with her hands tight together? She can hardly believe what she sees. But Jesus loosens the young man's hands and lays her boy's warm loving hand in the mother's trembling one.

I am sure that widow loved Jesus. She thought nothing too much to do for him.

Bible Readings.—Luke 7: 1-17; Matt. 8: 1-17; Luke 8: 41; 42: 49-56.

THE LUNATIC BREAKING HIS CHAINS.

See this poor wild man! He was crazy; we call him a lunatic; he would not live in a house, but rushed out naked, and ran away to the mountains and lived in caves among the rocks. Then he screamed and cried and picked up sharp stones and cut himself.

Some of his friends caught him and tried to bind him with strong chains, so that he could not run away. Look carefully and you will see that he broke even those strong chains. One day Jesus came in a ship across the sea of Galilee, into the country where the lunatic lived.

And when Jesus was come out of the ship the lunatic saw Him afar off and ran to Him and worshiped Him. Jesus knew at once what made the man so wild. It was an evil spirit, that is, a devil. Jesus said to the devil, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." Now if you will read the story in the Bible, you will find out the name of the devil, and where he went after he came out of the man.

How I wish I could show you another picture of this man after Jesus had sent the evil spirit away. You will have to shut your eyes and make a picture in your mind. Do you see him? Is he throwing his arms wildly about? No indeed, he is sitting down quietly by Jesus' side. Is he naked? No, he is clothed and in his right mind.

Jesus talked kindly to him for a little while, and then He had to go back to the ship. What do you think the man wanted to do? He wanted to go with Jesus into the ship. But Jesus said, "No, go home to your friends and tell them how great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you."

And the man went and told all his friends how great things Jesus had done for him, and all men did marvel.

There are men now living, who act as wildly as this lunatic. Some of them are men who are crazy from strong drink. I wish that every man who has such an evil spirit in him would come to Jesus as the lunatic did. For Jesus can cast out any evil spirit now, just as He did when on earth.

Bible Readings.—Mark 4: 35-41; 5: 1-20; Luke 8: 22-40.

THE LUNATIC BREAKING HIS CHAINS.—MARK V. 4.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

One day Jesus took Peter, James and John up into a high mountain. Only four went up on the mountain, but how many do you see in the picture? Peter, James and John are kneeling down. Yes, you can easily tell which one is Jesus. The other two are Moses and Elias. Now Moses and Elias had been dead hundreds of years. Then where did they come from?

They came from heaven to visit Jesus. They came to talk with Jesus about His death, which was very soon to take place.

When Moses and Elias first came to see Jesus, Peter and James and John were heavy with sleep, but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men that stood with Him.

What a wonderful sight they saw as they opened their eyes! Jesus was transfigured; that is, His face was shining as the sun; even His clothing was white as the light, exceeding white as snow. When Moses and Elias turned to go away, Peter did not want them to go so soon.

I like to read this beautiful story, because it makes me feel sure that when we go to heaven we will know our friends, and even other people whom we shall meet there, just as Peter knew Moses, although he had never seen him before. Our friends in heaven are not changed so that we will not know them, although their faces are brighter and they are dressed in shining garments. This story shows us that the angels do not always stay in one place; they can make visits and talk with their friends. Some children think that the angels sing all the time. I am sure they always have songs in their hearts, but they do not sing all the time around a throne. This earth is very beautiful, but there are more beautiful things in heaven, and the angels love to go from place to place to see and learn more and more about God's works. I think those angels who know more, teach the other angels, and certainly they all love and help each other in many ways.

Bible Readings.—Matt. 17 : 1-9; Mark 9 : 2-10; Luke 9 : 28-36; Lev. 21 : 10-27; 22 : 1-5, 12-21.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.—MARK IX. 2–4.

CHRIST AND THE TRIBUTE MONEY.

Have you ever seen a collection of coins in a museum? Have you noticed the different pictures stamped upon them? Many coins have the head of a king stamped on one side.

The coin which Jesus is pointing to has the head of an old Roman emperor upon it. This emperor was called Cæsar. Cæsar had sent men to collect some money for him.

Sometimes a king conquers a country in war; then he makes the people of that country send him money too. Such money is called tribute money. The Jews had been conquered by the Romans and every year they had to send their tribute money to Cæsar.

One day these Pharisees came to ask Jesus a question about paying tribute money to Cæsar. They said: "Is it right to give tribute to Cæsar or not? Tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou?" The Pharisees were wicked men; they did not really care to know what Jesus thought. They wanted to tempt Jesus to speak against Cæsar, then they intended to tell Cæsar and have Jesus arrested.

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" Then Jesus said, "Show me a penny." And they brought a penny to Jesus. It was not a coin like our cent, but a Roman coin called a denary, worth about fifteen cents.

When they had brought one, Jesus pointed to the coin as you see Him doing in the picture, and then asked a question. He said, "Whose image is on the penny?" They said Cæsar's.

Then Jesus said, "Give back to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

When they heard Jesus answer, they were surprised, and left Him and went away. They supposed that Jesus would tell them to call no one king but God.

Jesus showed them that they could honor an earthly king, and be true to God at the same time.

Bible Readings.—Matt. 22 : 15-22 ; 17 : 24-27 ; Mark 12 : 13-27 ; Luke 20 : 19-26.

CHRIST AND THE TRIBUTE MONEY.

ZACCHEUS.

Have you ever been to see a grand procession? Wasn't it hard to get a place where you could see well? I always envy the boys, for they can climb up into the trees, or to the top of the lamp-posts, and then they see right over the people's heads. Men are generally so tall they can see very well. Sometimes though, a man is very short. Then, if he wants to see in a crowd, he must get up on a post or in a tree. That is just what the man has done in this picture. His name is Zaccheus. He was a very rich man. He lived in a beautiful city called Jericho. Crowds and crowds of people were watching to see one man come to the city. Yes, that man was Jesus. Zaccheus wanted to see Jesus, but no one liked Zaccheus, and so no one helped him to a front place. Zaccheus had made his money by cheating the people, and so he had very few friends. He was a tax-collector for the Romans, a "publican," and he had taken too much money and kept some for himself.

Yet Zaccheus wanted to see Jesus. Zaccheus wanted to be a better man, I think. And he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said, "Zaccheus, come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house." And Zaccheus made haste and received Jesus joyfully.

But the Jews were angry and said Jesus had gone to stay with a sinner.

When Zaccheus found his sins made the people speak against Jesus, he was ashamed, and very sorry. So he stood up before the people, and said, "Lord, I will give the half of my goods to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man, I will give him back four times as much."

Then Jesus told the people that He had come to the earth to help sinners. He said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Now you see why Jesus went home with Zaccheus. He went to save Zaccheus from those dreadful sins.

Did you ever think that your naughty temper or your selfishness

may make some one speak against Jesus? People who do not love and serve Jesus, think less of *Him* when His children act wrongly.

ZACCHEUS CALLED BY CHRIST.

Let us be like Zaccheus and give up our wrong-doing from love to the dear Saviour.

Bible Readings.—Luke 19 : 1-10.

THE GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST.

When Jesus was on earth, there was one great feast or holiday-time which must have been very interesting to children. It was the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast came in the early autumn, when the weather was neither hot nor cold. Every Jew, no matter how far away he lived, tried to come to Jerusalem for this feast. For a whole week, every one lived in tents made of green boughs. These booths, or tents, were put up on the flat roofs, and in the court-yards.

The Jews lived in these tents to remind them of how their fathers lived in tents for forty years in the wilderness ; and during this Feast of Tabernacles, they offered thanks to God for the harvest, as we do at Thanksgiving. The feast lasted for seven days ; the last day was called the Great Day. At early dawn on that day, they rose up and dressed in their best, ready to take part in the services. Each boy and man had a willow and a myrtle branch, with a palm branch between, in his right hand; and in his left hand, a small kind of citron. There were three places to go to ; either straight to the Temple, or to a place near Jerusalem where they cut down willow branches, and brought them to trim the great altar ; or else they could join the procession to Siloam ; a priest walked in front of this procession, carrying a golden pitcher. At the pool of Siloam the priest stooped and filled the pitcher, and then they all marched back to the temple where the priest poured out the water at the great altar ; the people and other priests chanted from the psalms of David. Do you see the priest with the pitcher in his hand ? Last of all, as the people left the temple, they shook off the leaves of the willow branches and beat their palm branches to pieces. Then, in the afternoon, the booths were all taken down and the Feast of Tabernacles was over.

Just after the chanting of the psalms, there was a pause. It was then, when all was still, that Jesus, who had come to the Temple, stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Jesus was not thinking of water. He was thinking of our thirsting hearts. He knew our hearts grow thirsty for love and happiness.

There is no longing of our hearts for goodness, love or happiness that Jesus can not satisfy. Indeed, He invites us to come to Him if we are in need. Only the day before, Jesus had talked with the people, and some had believed, but some had only wondered.

The priests had said, "Take him prisoner." But Jesus was not

THE GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST.

afraid of the priests. Many said, "This is the Christ." Others said, "Never man spake like this man." And no man ever did speak like Jesus. We know from His words, that He was our God.

Bible Readings.—John 7 : 10-46.

JUDAS ISCARIOT COVENANTING.

JUDAS.

How interested these people seem! You can see they are talking about a secret. Who do you think that is in front? It is one of

Jesus' disciples—Judas. He has been living with Jesus more than two years.

Don't you think he must love Jesus? No, he did not love the Lord. I will tell you why. Judas loved himself too much to have any real love for Jesus.

Judas saw Jesus heal the sick, and heard him say, "I am the Christ." Judas thought that Christ was to be a great king. So he stayed close to Jesus. He thought he loved Jesus, but he only loved what he hoped Jesus would give him. Judas kept the money to buy food for Jesus and his disciples. One day Judas was tempted to take some of that money for himself. If only he had told Jesus about it, our Saviour would have helped him. But Judas listened to the evil voice in his heart, and kept the money. That was very bad, was it not? But that was not the worst. The chief priests and Pharisees hated Jesus. They wanted to kill Him, but before they could do that they had to take Him as a prisoner.

"It won't do to arrest Jesus in the day-time," said the priests, "the people will be angry. Let us give some money to the man who will show us where to find Jesus at night."

Judas heard about the money the priests would give. He began to wish for it. Judas knew it was wrong to tell the priests where Jesus was. But the evil spirit kept telling him how nice it would be to get the money. Judas had listened to the evil spirit before and therefore it was easier to do wrong now. When we do wrong once, it is easier to do it next time, and if we take the first wrong step, we can not tell where it may lead us.

Judas went to the chief priests and said, "If you will give me thirty pieces of silver, I will take the soldiers to Jesus at night.

Do you see the bag in the priest's hand? That has the money in it. Read in the Bible how Judas brought the soldiers to Jesus. Read what he did with those thirty pieces of silver.

Bible Readings.—Matt. 26: 3-5, 14-16; Matt. 27: 3-8; Mark 14: 32-46; John 8: 1-4; John 12: 1-8.

CHRIST MOCKED.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and arrayed Him in a purple garment.

And Pilate went out again, and said unto them, "Behold, I bring Him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in Him."

Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and a purple garment.

And Pilate saith unto them, "Behold the man!" When therefore, the chief priest and the officers saw him they cried out, saying, "Crucify him, crucify him."

Pilate saith unto them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him; for I find no crime in Him."

Then the Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself the Son of God."

When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the palace again, and saith unto Jesus, "Whence art Thou?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilate therefore saith unto Him, "Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to release Thee, and have power to crucify Thee?"

Jesus answered him, "Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.

Upon this, Pilate sought to release Him; but the Jews cried out, saying, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend; every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar."

When Pilate there heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called "The Pavement."

And he saith unto the Jews, "Behold your king!"

They therefore cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify him."

Bible Readings.—John 19: 1-16; Math. 27: 11-25; Mark 15: 1-15; Luke 23: 1-24.

CHRIST MOCKED.

CARRYING THE CROSS.

They took Jesus therefore ; and He went out, bearing the cross for Himself unto the place which in Hebrew, is called Golgotha ; where they crucified Him, and with Him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross, and the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. And it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek.

The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, " Write not the King of the Jews; but that he *said*, 'I am the King of the Jews.' "

Pilate answered, " What I have written, I have written."

The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part ; and also the coat ; now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

They said, therefore, one to another, " Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be ; " that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, (Ps. 22 : 18.)

" They parted My garments among them,
And upon My vesture did they cast lots."

These things, therefore the soldiers did.

But there were standing by the cross of Jesus, His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciples standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, " Woman, behold thy Son ! " Then saith he to the disciple, " Behold thy mother ! " And from that hour the disciple (John) took her unto his own home.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith, " I thirst."

There was set then a vessel full of vinegar ; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth; When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, " It is finished ; " and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

Bible Reading.— John 19 : 17-30 ; Luke. 23 : 26-46 ; Mark 15 : 21-37 ; Math. 27 : 32-50.

CARRYING THE CROSS.

AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

Suppose a little heathen boy, who had been told about Jesus dying on the cross, should see this picture. He would say, "Why, Jesus did not die, after all!"

"Oh yes," you tell him, "Jesus died and was buried."

"But," says the boy, "I am sure that is a picture of Jesus, and he has been nailed to the cross, for I see the marks of the nails in his hands. But he is not dead! He is well and strong!"

Then we would tell the boy of the resurrection—how the angel came and rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and the Lord came forth—how He has promised us, "That, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ, shall all be made alive."

This picture tells us about the Sunday night after that sad Friday, when Jesus was nailed to the cross. Ten of the disciples and some other friends were together in an upper room. Mary Magdalene told them she had seen the Lord early that morning. Two of the disciples had just come back from a village named Emmaus, to tell the others that the Lord had walked with them and had asked a blessing at their supper, and then had vanished.

Jesus' friends wondered at all this, but as they wondered, Jesus stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be unto you." Some of them were frightened, but Jesus said, "Why are ye troubled? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I, myself." Then, to help them feel quite sure He was really alive, Jesus asked for some food, and ate a piece of fish before he left.

But one disciple named Thomas was not there. When the others told him they had seen the Lord, he said, "Unless I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe." The next Sunday evening the disciples were in the same room again, and Thomas was with them. Then came Jesus and stood in the midst and said, "Peace be unto you." He told

Thomas to put his hand in the print of the nails. But Thomas knew Jesus, and said, "My Lord and my God." Jesus said, "Thomas,

AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

Bible Readings.—John 20th Chapter; Luke 23 : 50-56; Luke 24.

FEED MY LAMBS.

Can you tell me the name of any one in this picture? Yes, the one with the mark in His hand is Jesus. Peter is standing nearest Him. I think that is John next to Peter. We know that James and Nathanael are there, and two others. The seven disciples have been out in a boat fishing. They fished all night, but caught nothing. But when the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus told the disciples to cast the net on the right side of the ship and they would find. They obeyed, and now the net was full of fishes.

Then John said to Peter, "It is the Lord." Peter jumped right into the water and swam to land. The other disciples came in a little boat, dragging the net.

When they were all on shore, Jesus gave them a warm breakfast. Afterward Jesus said to Peter, "Lovest thou me?"

Peter was sure he loved Jesus, and he said, "Yes, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Then Jesus said to Peter, "Feed my lambs."

But Jesus asked Peter the same question three times. Do you remember what Peter had done three times? Jesus knew Peter was very sorry that he had ever told such a lie, and had said he did not know Jesus. That is why Jesus let Peter tell his love three times.

I am sure you know who Jesus meant by His lambs. Now, do you think Peter can feed you? Yes, he has left some food for you. You will find, in the Bible, a letter written by Peter, and it is full of food for your soul. Peter tells you in that letter that the Bible is milk for you. He tells you that when you have tried to do right and yet some one finds fault, to take it patiently, for this will please God. For it is better, if it is the will of God, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. This may help you some time when people think you have

done wrong and you are sure you have not. Peter tells you to be loving and pitiful and polite. Now if you will think of these things

FEED MY LAMBS.

and try to do them, your souls will be fed, and so Peter, by his letter, is still feeding Christ's lambs.

BibleReadings.—John 21; Luke 22: 31-34; 54-61; I Peter 2: 1-3; 20-25; I Peter 3: 8-14.

"I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU."

"And Jesus led His disciples out as far as Bethany; and he lifted up His hands and blessed them."

And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. "And a cloud received Him out of their sight."

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.'"

"And the disciples worshiped Jesus, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God."

Do you wonder how the disciples could return to Jerusalem with great joy after Jesus had left them and ascended to heaven?

I think it must have been because Jesus had said to them, "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Do you remember when it was that Jesus told His disciples about "the many mansions" in His Father's house? It was just after the Last Supper, the same night that He was betrayed.

The disciples were very sad that night; they could not understand why Jesus was to die, and then go away; they did not want him to go away. But Jesus spoke kindly for He knew their hearts were troubled. He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. . . . I will not leave you comfortless. *I will come to you.*" When you read the next story, you will see how Jesus remembered His promise to come and comfort His disciples.

Bible Readings.—Luke 24: 50-53; Acts 1: 9-14; John 14: 1-9, 18-23.

THE ASCENSION.

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT.

Do you remember that God spoke to Moses from a burning bush? Do you remember that He sent fire from heaven to burn the sacrifice when Elijah prayed? This is another wonderful story about fire.

In the picture you see little tongue-shaped flames. They will not burn; they only appear bright like fire. One rests over each person. These men and women are Jesus' disciples and friends, who have been waiting and watching in Jerusalem for fifty days since Jesus ascended. Why did they wait and watch? Jesus had told them to tarry in Jerusalem until power had come to them from on high.

And when the day of Pentecost was come, they were all in one place. The day of Pentecost was a great feast-day, and many strangers had come to Jerusalem from different countries to celebrate the feast.

But the disciples were gathered together in an upper room, as usual. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared tongues, like as of fire, and sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus had said just before He had ascended, "Lo, I am with you alway." He had said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." But it was very hard for the disciples to understand that Jesus was with them after they had seen Him ascend into heaven. The Spirit of the Lord came in this wonderful way to help them understand that Jesus had not really left them. It was as if Jesus had come back, but not to live any more as a Man among them, but to live closer to them by His Spirit. "Lo, I am with you always." God is a Spirit. We can not see a Spirit. "No man hath seen God at any time," but in many wonderful ways God has taught us of Himself. He was made flesh and dwelt among us. He came in this rushing mighty wind. Now we can understand that He is always with us, even though we can not see Him.

Bible Readings.—Acts 2: 1-12; Matt. 28: 20; John 14: 15-21, 25, 26; Mark 12: 19; Deut. 6: 4.

THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT.

THE DEATH OF STEPHEN.

I do not wonder that some of these people are turning away, and covering their faces with their hands. I only wonder that any one can look at such a sight!

This man is being stoned to death. His name is Stephen.

Still I think I would rather look at Stephen than at any other part of the picture. He looks so quiet and peaceful. He is not thinking of those dreadful stones, for he is looking right into heaven.

Have you ever read in the Bible what Stephen said when he looked up into heaven and saw the glory of God?

He said, "Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." These poor people did not understand that the Lord can open our *inner* eyes and let us see into heaven. They did not believe Stephen and would not listen.

They cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, so that they should not hear him tell what he saw in heaven.

Some of the men rushed upon Stephen and cast him out of the city and stoned him.

Stephen spoke to the Lord as he was dying, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then Stephen kneeled down and prayed for his enemies just as Jesus prayed for the men who nailed him to the cross. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them." Stephen said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

In another moment Stephen was gone where the stones could not hurt him any more. He fell asleep and the Lord did receive him into heaven as he had asked. Stephen is there now, and we shall see him some day with many other martyrs who have suffered for Jesus. For it was because Stephen had preached about Jesus that he was stoned to death.

Stephen is called the First Christian Martyr.

Bible Readings.—Acts 6 : 1-15 ; 7 : 1-60 ; 8 : 1-2; Matt. 5 : 10-12, 43-45 ; 6 : 12 ; Luke 23 : 34 ; Romans 12 : 14, 17-20.

THE DEATH OF STEPHEN.

THE JAILER.

You have heard how Saul, the Jew, who hated Christians, became Paul, the Christian, who preached Christ to the Jews, have you not? If not, ask mamma to read all about it. This picture tells you about something that happened to Paul and his friend Silas. Paul and Silas had come to a city called Philippi.

A woman named Lydia lived in Philippi. When she heard Paul preach, she believed the gospel and was baptized.

Then she begged Paul and Silas to stay at her house. So they staid there. Every day as they walked through the streets, a poor half-crazy girl followed them.

She pointed to Paul and Silas, and said, "These men are the servants of the most high God."

Some bad man used to pretend this poor girl could tell fortunes. The girl was their slave. But when she had followed Paul many days, Paul was sorry for her. He knew there was a wicked spirit in her. So he told the wicked spirit to leave the poor girl. Then she was just a quiet Christian girl, and would not tell fortunes for the bad men.

Oh, how angry they were! They had Paul and Silas beaten and put into prison. They told the jailer to keep Paul and Silas locked up.

Do you think Paul and Silas felt badly? No, indeed.

They sang hymns to God at midnight. Then suddenly the strong prison shook, the doors flew open, and the chains fell off the prisoners.

The jailer had gone to sleep, but the shaking waked him, and when he saw the doors open he was going to kill himself. He thought the prisoners had all run away, and he knew if his prisoners had run away, he would be killed. So he was going to kill himself, but Paul cried out, "We are all here."

Then the jailer knew that the story Paul had told of Jesus must

be true. He ran in and kneeling down, cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and then in the middle of the night they had a

THE JAILER.

prayer-meeting; and the jailer did believe in the Lord and was baptized that same night.

Bible Readings.—Acts 16: 14-40.

EPHESIANS BURNING THEIR BOOKS.

Here is another picture about Paul. This tells us about what Paul did three years after he had been shut up in the jail at Philippi. You can see by the picture that he is in a large city. It is Ephesus, one of the largest cities of Asia. Ephesus was full of great buildings, and had one of the seven wonders of the world in it. This was the beautiful temple of Diana where the heathen people worshiped. A great many people in Ephesus earned their living by being priests of this goddess Diana. Books had been written by priests full of wonderful secrets. These secrets were really mere nonsense, but a man who owned one of these books could make a great deal of money. Books were not printed in those days, but written, and one book cost hundreds of dollars. These books of magic cost even more.

Do you think Paul believed in those books? He knew that things happened according to God's will, and the best secret is that God loves us. He was sorry for the poor deceived people. So He lived in Ephesus for three years, telling the good news of the gospel. And God, to help the people believe, let Paul heal the sick, and work many miracles. Some of the magicians thought they would try to use the name of Jesus, and heal the people as Paul did. But the evil spirit answered "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them and overcame them. When others heard how the magicians had been punished, they came to Paul, confessed their sins and believed on the Lord.

Many also of those men who had the curious books brought their books together and burned them. Do you know why they would not sell them? They knew the books were full of cheats and lies. Now that they were Christians they could not sell such wicked books. The books might keep others from Christ.

Do you think there are any bad books now? Yes, indeed; and no matter how pretty a book is, or how much it costs, if it teaches things which are wrong, we must have nothing to do with it. If a bad book belongs to us, we should not give it away, for it may then hurt others;

but we should burn it. Sometimes books which are not really bad, are foolish and waste our time. There are so many interesting good

EPHESIANS BURNING THEIR BOOKS.

books, that we should try to find them, and not read every book that happens to come in our way.

Ask your parents and teachers to help you choose the best books for boys and girls.

Bible Readings.—Acts 19 : 1-20.

THE TUMULT AT EPHESUS.

There were a great many silversmiths who made cunning little models or copies of the great temple of Diana. Every one who came to Ephesus used to buy one of those silver models to carry home. Besides these, the silversmiths made statues of Diana holding a bow in her hand, and heads of Diana. So many people worshiped the goddess Diana, that the silversmiths could sell a great many of these things, for the people worshiped the little images too.

But when Paul had preached in Ephesus for three years, these silversmiths found they did not sell nearly so many images. Do you know why? One silversmith named Demetrius called a meeting of all the men in his trade. He told the men that if Paul was allowed to keep on preaching, they would lose their trade. He said, "Not only here in Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, 'There be no gods, which are made with hands.' And so we will soon be unable to sell our images, and the temple of the great goddess Diana will be despised."

Then all the people shouted, and for about two hours they kept crying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." One of the new Christians, a man named Alexander, stood up and beckoned to the people to listen to him. Do you see him? But you can see they are not listening. No, indeed! they kept on shouting, till at last the town-clerk made them all go home. The Christians kept Paul out of sight, though he wanted to speak to the people. But Paul's friends were afraid he might be killed. After the tumult was over, the Christians begged Paul to go and preach somewhere else, and he did leave Ephesus. In the picture you can see one of the models of the front of the temple of Diana. Do you know that one of the books of the Bible is a letter which Paul wrote to the Christians in Ephesus? The people who lived at Ephesus were called Ephesians. See if you can find Paul's letter and read what he says to little children.

Bible Readings.—Acts 19 : 23-41 ; Acts 20 : 1-3 ; Eph. 4 : 25-32 ; Eph. 5 : 1 ; Eph. 6 : 1-3 ; 3 : 10-18 .

THE TUMULT AT EPHESUS.

JOHN ON PATMOS.

This old man is John, the beloved disciple of Jesus. John lived many years after he saw Jesus ascend to heaven. He lived to be nearly one hundred years old. He taught many people about Jesus.

When John was a very old man, he wrote the story of Jesus' life. In this book you can find many of the loving words that he had heard Jesus speak. John knew that some people did not believe that Jesus was God, and so he wrote in his book, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God—and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Then he also wrote in his book what Jesus said to Philip the night before he was crucified. Philip was one who did not understand that Jesus was truly God.

Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father."

Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. And how sayest thou then, 'Show us the Father?'"

John also wrote three short loving letters when he was an old man. In one of these letters, he said:

"Little children, love one another."

"He that loves not does not know God, for God is love."

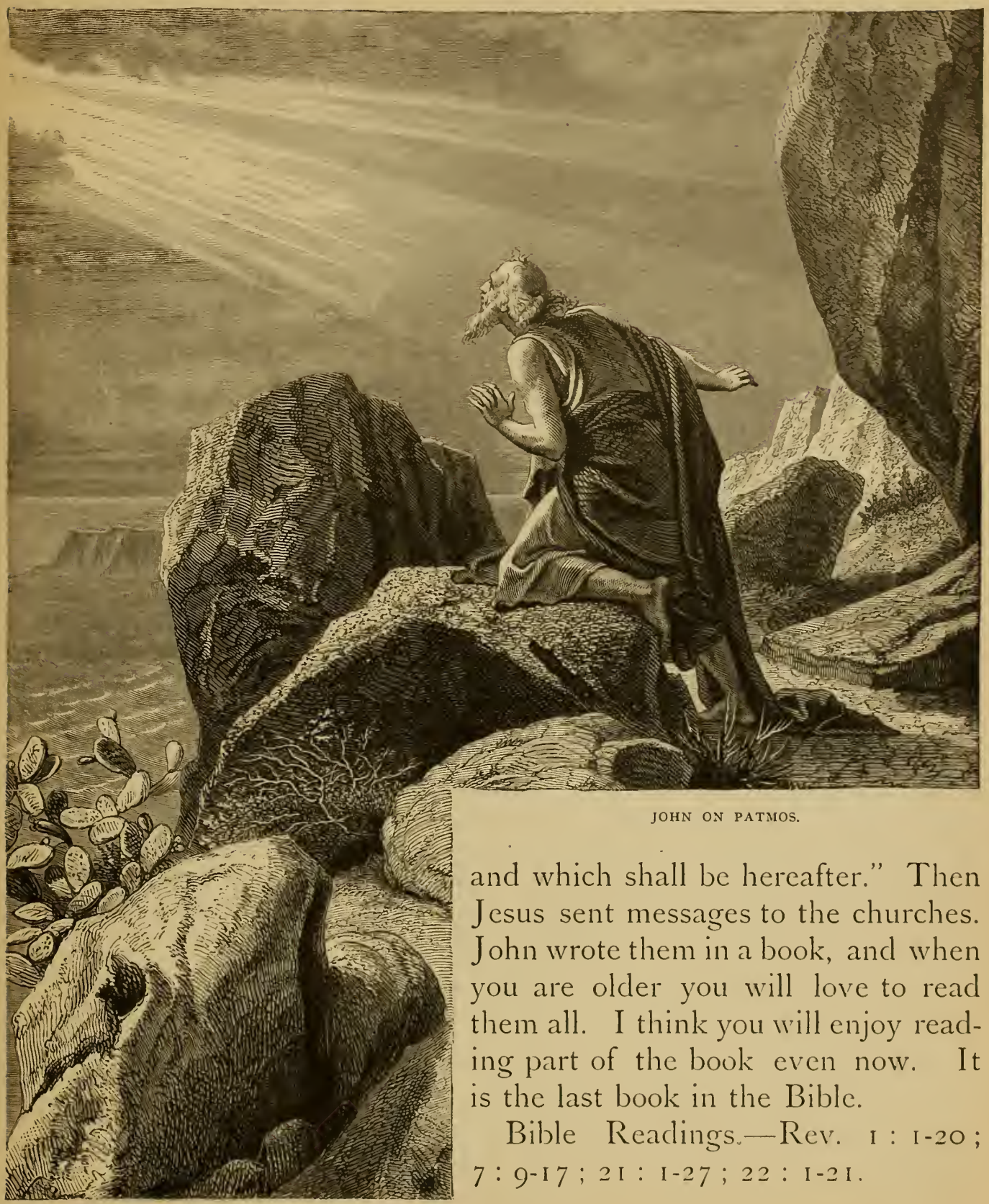
"My little children, let us not love in word only, but in deed and in truth."

But I must tell you where John is in the picture. He is on an island in the Mediterranean Sea. It is the island of Patmos. John was sent away to live on this island like a prisoner, because he loved Jesus. One day while he was on this island, the Lord opened his eyes so that he could see into heaven. John saw Jesus—Jesus was even more full of glory and brightness than when He was transfigured.

"His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength."

When John saw Jesus, he fell at His feet as if he were dead, because the glory was almost too great for him to bear. But Jesus laid His hand upon John, and spoke lovingly as when on earth: "Fear not; I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive

forevermore—write the things which thou hast seen and which are,



JOHN ON PATMOS.

and which shall be hereafter." Then Jesus sent messages to the churches. John wrote them in a book, and when you are older you will love to read them all. I think you will enjoy reading part of the book even now. It is the last book in the Bible.

Bible Readings.—Rev. 1 : 1-20; 7 : 9-17; 21 : 1-27; 22 : 1-21.

JESUS BLESSING CHILDREN.

THE CHILDREN'S BIBLE HOUR

PART II.—FOR YOUTH

THE EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN.

GENESIS III.

Did you ever think how many centuries passed while God was preparing the earth for Adam? We read in the first chapter of Genesis that light was created on the first day; the firmament on the second; the seas, and grass, and trees on the third, and so on; but the study of geology proves that each of these "days" means a division of time, not a day in the sense we use the word. The records of the rocks are traced by the finger of the Almighty just as truly as were the two Tables of the Law, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and these records prove that thousands of years went by from that moment, "in the beginning," when God created the heaven and the earth, and the hour when God the Father said, "Let Us make man in Our Image."

It was just before the creation of man, no doubt, that the garden was prepared for him. And the rocks tell us a wonderful thing about this. We learn, by the fossil remains of the trees and ferns before the existence of man, that it was not till man appeared that God clothed the earth with fields of grain, sweet-smelling herbs and flowers, or luscious fruits. There were pine trees and ferns, but the lovelier flowers and fruits were called into being for Adam's delight and nourishment.

Try to imagine this first man and woman in their beautiful home; learning from God how to dress and keep their garden, warned by Him of the dreadful punishment that would follow disobedience. But remember that, until they were tried and had resisted, Adam and Eve were *innocent* but not *good*. True goodness is choosing the right and refusing the wrong; it is resisting evil and accepting good. So Satan was allowed to tempt them, and—they chose the evil!

"The woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."

Caedmon, an English poet of the seventh century, in a poetical account of the story of Adam's fall, makes Satan say to Eve:

> "Tell Adam," said he, "God has sent me as his vassal
> To tell him he should eat this fruit,
> To increase his understanding, power and strength;
> To make his body shine like that of angels, and
> His form more beauteous. He will need no treasure else
> In the whole world."

At first (I am telling you the story in Caedmon's way, not the short account in the Bible) Adam will not believe that Satan is sent by God. Satan, who is in the form of a serpent, is not like an angel and brings no proof that God has sent him. But the serpent talks with Eve alone and tells her God will be angry if He hears that Adam has slandered him (Satan), and that if she eat she will grow wise; her "eyes will be so clear they will see even to His throne." So, at last, she takes the fruit and tastes it before Adam, who then eats.

Then, when Satan leaves them, Adam and Eve feel what they have done—the air grows chill and cold as it has never been before.

"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"

Coming out before an angry God! We, who have heard of a Saviour to bear that anger for us, cannot guess what they suffered. It must have been almost a relief to hear what their punishment was to be.

They were to leave the beautiful garden, and the care of the ground, which had been a delight, was to be a labor. "Cursed is the ground, for thy sake . . . thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee;" while Eve was told that her children should be a sorrow and care to her from their very birth. But they are not left without hope. The Saviour is promised, and God Himself clothes them in the skins of wild beasts.

Then they are driven forth; God setting at the gate of the garden "cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." A very thoughtful writer says: "Was not the brightness darting its sword-like rays on every side the symbol of the presence of God? Perhaps in the light of

THE EXPULSION FROM THE GARDEN.

that flaming sword Adam and Eve often knelt to ask forgiveness, guidance, and protection."

Look carefully at the picture and you will see how horrible everything seems about the two sinners. Wild beasts growling at them—the very branches of the trees seem to take hideous shapes as Adam and his wife pass by.

What an awful thing sin must be in God's eyes to make such a punishment necessary. So awful that only the sacrifice of His own Beloved Son could atone for it. But since there is a way provided to get back the good that has been lost, we need not mourn the fall. The New Paradise of God shall be far beyond that Paradise He prepared for our first parents.

No one supposes that fire was used or needed in the Garden of Eden, but surely when turned out into the bleak world Adam would learn of fire. One poet pictures Adam seeing two trees, which had been driven by the wind against each other, ignite. He runs from the fire till he reaches a plain; then turns to watch it and enjoys the pleasant heat, finding his muddy dress dry quickly by it. Again and again he tries to kindle a fire.

"While (elsewhere musing) one day he sat down
Upon a steep rock's craggy, forkéd crown,
A foaming beast come toward him he espies,
Within whose head stood beaming coals for eyes;
Then suddenly with boisterous arms he throws
A knotty flint that hummeth as it goes;
Hence flies the beast, th' ill-aimed flint-shaft grounding
Against the rock, and on it oft rebounding,
Shivers to cinders, whence there issuéd
Small sparks of fire, no sooner born than dead.
This happy chance made Adam leap for glee,
And quickly calling his cold company,
In his left hand a shining flint he locks,
Which with another in his right he knocks,
So up and down, that from the coldest stone
At every stroke small fiery sparkles shone.
Then with the dry leaves of a withered bay,
The which together handsomely they lay,
They take the falling fire, which, like a sun
Shines clear and smokeless in the leaf begun."

We know that Adam lived to be nine hundred and thirty years old, seeing his children and grandchildren to the time of Lamech. Adam had a wonderful vitality, but gradually, as his descendants yielded to sin more and more, that vitality grew weaker and the term of life shorter. James Montgomery gives a beautiful picture of Adam's death. Enoch, he who "walked with God," is supposed to be speaking. The night was one of awful storm "as if the world would perish with our Sire."

"Closed his eyelids with a tranquil smile,
And seemed to rest in silent prayer awhile:
Around his couch in filial awe we kneeled,
When suddenly a light from heaven revealed
A SPIRIT, that stood within the unopened door;
The sword of God in His right hand he bore;
His countenance was lightning, and his vest
Like snow at sunrise on the mountain's crest;
Yet so benignly beautiful His form,
His presence stilled the fury of the storm;
At once the winds retire, the waters cease;
His look was love, His salutation, Peace!

Our Mother first beheld him, sore amazed,
But terror grew to transport as she gazed:
'Tis He, the Prince of Seraphim, who drove
Our banished feet from Eden's happy grove;
'Adam, my life, my spouse, awake!' she cried,
'Return to Paradise, behold thy Guide.
Oh, let me follow in this dear embrace!'
She sank, and on his bosom hid her face.
Adam looked up, his visage changed its hue,
Transformed into an angel's at the view;
'I come,' he cried, 'with faith's full triumph fired,'
And in a sigh of ecstasy expired."

NIMROD AND ABRAHAM.

GENESIS X. TO XV.

MANY very ancient ruins testify that early in the world's history men delighted in building high towers "whose top may reach unto heaven." One such ruin has from the most ancient times been known as Birs Nimrud, or the Tower of Nimrod. This is a bare hill, one hundred and ninety-eight feet high, of yellow sand and brick, near the left bank of the Euphrates. On this hill there is a ruined tower forty feet high, said to have been repaired by Nebuchadnezzar.

Herodotus describes a tower of Babylon which may give us some idea of the Tower of Babel. It stood in an enclosure twelve hundred feet square and was over six hundred feet square at its base, rising to a height of nine hundred feet. Seven square towers rose one above the other, like gigantic steps, each smaller than the one below and colored, successively, black, white, orange, blue, scarlet, silver, and gold. The ascent was made by a winding path on the outside, with a landing-place and seats for resting about the middle of the way up. In the topmost tower was a spacious temple, but the golden image of the god was in the lowest tower, on a golden throne, before a golden table, set on a golden floor. You may form some idea of the size of this tower by the fact that Alexander the Great employed ten thousand men, for two months, in removing the rubbish which had fallen from it in his day.

Jewish tradition says that Nimrod, worshipped as a god by the people, wished to build a town for his own glory. "Come," he is supposed to say, "let us build a great city, and establish ourselves in it, that we may not be scattered over the whole earth, and drowned in a flood, as happened to our forefathers. Let us raise in the midst of the city a tower so high that no flood could rise above it, so strong that no fire, should one break out, could destroy it. Yes, let us do still more, let us build it up into the heavens, and stay it in them, on all its four sides, that it be steady, and that the waters in the sky may not fall on us."

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

Though all were not so foolish as to think of conquering heaven, and driving God from His throne, yet they complied with Nimrod's wishes. Many saw in the tower a real safeguard against men being scattered, or drowned by a flood. Others believed the scheme would advance the idolatry they loved. Therefore, six hundred thousand men, among whom were six thousand princes, set to work to build the tower and raised it till its top was seventy miles high. . . . When the builders ran short of anything it was a year before they could get the material to the top.

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad.

In striking contrast to this proud and boastful Nimrod, is Abraham, the Friend of God. He was born in Ur of the Chaldees, so let us look for a moment at that city. Its ruins form a vast mound in a plain so flat and low that when the Euphrates rises it can only be approached in a boat. But very different was the scene, four thousand years ago. The city was then flourishing; arts and sciences were cultivated; astronomers watched the heavens; poets composed hymns and epics, and patient scribes stamped, on soft clay tablets, the books which have, in part, come down to our day. For the ancient race which lived in those lands were, beyond most, given to writing and reading. The waters of the Euphrates did not then flood the country, but spread in a network of sparkling canals and rivulets which carried fertility to the whole landscape. The houses, with fanciful designs painted outside, like the temple towers, stood on platforms. To shut out the heat, the walls of the better class were very thick. The windows were high up and small; the rooms long, narrow, and gloomy, and all opened into one another, while a central arch formed the entry from without. Trees planted all round served to protect the inmates from the overpowering rays of the sun. Handsome pottery of many kinds abounded, for many-shaped jars, lamps, and vessels are found in the old Chaldean graves. Clay tablets stamped with figures and groups of men and animals displayed artistic skill, and the stone-engraver carved designs of human or divine forms on cylinders of jasper and other stones; to be used for impressing the device on soft tablets by rolling it over them.

Sun-dials marked the hours of the day, which had already been divided as we now have them; and the smith and jeweller furnished the field, the camp, the house and the person with a long list of implements, weapons, and ornaments in various metals. Chaldea produced neither figs, olives, nor grapes, but the palm made up for the lack of these. The fruit of this tree, hanging in clusters of amber or gold, is at once pleasant to the eye, delicious and nourishing—the very kernels, when broken up, feed the goats. An incision in the stem yields a drink which takes the place of wine. The crown, which grows from the top, and the inner fibres and pith, are boiled for food. Mats and baskets are made from the leaves, while the stem furnishes pillars, roofing, and furniture. In Abraham's day it grew almost in forests in Chaldea. The whole district, indeed, was amazingly fertile and highly cultivated. Shady with palms, tamarisks, and acacias, it was also rich in pomegranates, and golden with fields of the finest wheat. Millet grew to a fabulous height, and all kinds of corn-plants produced two and even three hundred fold. Think of this city and country as you read:

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." (Heb. xi., 8.)

And now as to the religious teaching in Chaldea. Strange to say, some of the hymns that Abraham may have heard chanted by the priests in Ur, remain to this day. One is addressed to the moon; here are a few lines from it:

> Father mine, of life the giver, cherishing, beholding all!
> Lord, whose power benign extends over all in heaven and earth!
> Thou drawest forth from heaven the seasons and the rains;
> Thou watchest life and yieldest showers!
> Who in heaven is high exalted? Thou, sublime is thy reign!

Magic had great power in Chaldea. Magicians claimed to avert by spells and incantations the malignity of countless genii and evil spirits which filled the air, the earth, and the abyss below it.

And, amidst all this idolatry and superstition Abraham grew up! His own father, Terah, "served other gods" (Josh. xxiv., 2), but he, in spite of example, and (so says tradition) of persecution, worshipped Jehovah. Yet, in the midst of all the idolatry, the traditions of Creation, the Flood, and the Confusion of Tongues

were preserved; and in Ur of the Chaldees, the boy Abram would hear the seventh day spoken of as "the day of rest for the heart," on which even the king dared not ride out in his chariot, or eat forbidden meats.

We know from the Bible (Acts vii., 2) that it was while still in Ur that Abraham received the call from God; but it was Terah, his father, who took the tribe out from Chaldea to the land of Harran—"six hundred miles northwest of Ur as the crow flies and much more by the winding road." It was a journey of months from Ur to Harran. "It was a land that might please Terah and Nahor for its pastures, and its temples would offer them the idol sanctuaries in which they chose to worship," but Abraham was not satisfied. After his father's death he, with his nephew Lot, set forth for Canaan—the Land of Promise. Though Abraham never called himself a king we must not think of him as travelling in less than kingly state. Dean Stanley gives this picture of the journey: "All their substance that they had gotten is heaped high on the backs of their kneeling camels. 'The slaves that they had bought in Harran' run along by their sides. Round them are their flocks of sheep and goats, and the asses, moving beneath the towering forms of the camels. The chief is there, amidst the stir of movement, or resting at noon within his black tent, marked out from the rest by his cloak of brilliant scarlet, by the fillet of rope which binds the loose handkerchief round his head, by the spear which he holds in his hand to guide the march and to fix the encampment. The chief's wife, the princess of the tribe, is there in her own tent (Gen. xxiv., 67) to make the cakes and to prepare the usual meal of milk and butter; the slave or the child is ready to bring in the red lentil soup for the weary hunter, or to kill the calf for the unexpected guest."

Abraham, after crossing the great river, passed on to Damascus, where tradition says he reigned as a king, and so on to Canaan, where the promise was given, "Unto thy seed will I give this land," a promise made when Abraham was childless. "And he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness." And then by a solemn covenant the promise was renewed and by a vision God showed Abraham the future of his nation. "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterward they shall come out with great substance."

EL KHALIL-ALLAH.

GENESIS XIII., 1–13; XIV., XVI., XXI., 1–13; and XXII.

It is as El Khalil-Allah, "The Friend of God," the name by which he is still called among his Arab children, that I would write of Abraham in this chapter.

He had left the heathen city of Ur and lived as a "stranger and sojourner" among the people of Canaan. He had, because of a severe drought and famine, gone down into Egypt and seen the wonderful palaces and cities of the Pharaohs, living for some years, tradition says, in the sacred city of On "where his descendants lived afterward as slaves." He then returned to the mountain east of Bethel, "unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord."

And here it is that we see him as "The friend of God." There is a quarrel in the great camp; the herdsmen of Lot (who, though Abraham's nephew, was not very much younger than he) dispute with Abraham's herdsmen, for the pasturage grows scarce. But the man who has God for his Friend cannot quarrel: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee," says Abraham, though he was the chief of the tribe and could have asserted his rights, "for we be brethren; . . . . if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

As they stood on the mountain they looked down upon a beautiful and fertile plain, where cattle could find abundant pasturage, and, close at hand, were the cities of the plain, where one could be sure of a market for the produce of his flocks. Lot's choice was made at once; he pitched his tent outside Sodom (chief among the cities of the plain), and Abraham moved south to Hebron, where "he built an altar to the Lord." Here, at last, he could rest, almost at home in this upland vale, with its mingled town and country life, its wells and its clumps of oak-trees, amidst the cool and delightful climate of an elevation of nearly three thousand feet above the sea.

The next recorded event in Abraham's life clearly shows that he cherished no vexed feeling toward Lot. A messenger comes to tell him Lot has been taken prisoner by an invading army. Abraham gathers his fighting men together (three hundred and eighteen trained soldiers), asks the help of the Amorite chiefs who live near —Mamre, "the manly," Eschol, "the brave," and Aner, "the branch," and, with less than a thousand men, went in pursuit of the enemy. The little army surprised the great host at night, rushed upon them on three sides, and caused a perfect rout and panic. Lot was rescued, besides many others, with much booty. Two kings came to meet Abraham on his homeward march—the king of Sodom, and Melchizedek the king of Salem—"and he," says the Scripture, "was the priest of the most high God."

From the king of Sodom, who offered him all the booty, Abraham would take nothing—the Friend of God needed not to be enriched by a heathen king; but he gratefully received Melchizedek's blessing. No one knows who this Melchizedek was. Professor Geikie says: "It is quite possible that, like Abraham, he may have been one of the early Pilgrim Fathers, who had left Chaldea to escape the growing bitterness and intensity of idol worship, which were making fidelity to the faith of purer ages impossible."

Ten years Abraham had lived in Canaan, and then, since Sarah had no child, she gave Hagar, her "bondwoman," to Abraham as a wife, and Ishmael, "God hears," was born. The boy grew up, the darling and pride, no doubt, of the whole camp. He was Abraham's son—for twelve years the heir. But when the boy was just growing into manhood God gave Sarah a child, whom in her delight she named Isaac, "laughter." Ishmael, no longer the heir, but "the son of the bondwoman," did not give up his place willingly to the laughing boy. At a birthday feast Sarah saw him mocking her child, and went at once to Abraham, saying: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

"And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman: in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar (putting it on her shoulder), and the child, and sent her away."

THE TRIAL OF THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM.

To understand the trial that the Friend of God was next called to endure, we must not forget what has been written in regard to Ur of the Chaldees. There Abraham had seen not only bulls and rams offered in sacrifice, but had looked upon human victims. Men had there given "their first-born for their transgressions." Now, when he had separated himself from the heathen, when he had for years looked on the offering of human sacrifice as *wrong*, now he was told: "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Abraham rose up early in the morning, and, taking two of his young men, and Isaac his son, went to the place of which God had told him. "Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together. And Isaac . . . . said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?"

Our picture represents Isaac as a boy, but he was twenty years of age—"a lad" to his father, just as many a young man of twenty and over is a "boy" to his parents nowadays, yet a full-grown man, able to resist and therefore a willing sacrifice, allowing his father to bind him to the altar.

"And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son."

After twenty-five years of patient waiting for him! After twenty years, during which he had watched the God-given child grow from babyhood to boyhood, from boyhood to manly beauty and strength—after all, it had come to this! St. Paul tells us what it was that nerved the loving father's arm: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; . . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." Surely such a man may well be called the Father of the Faithful, the Friend of God.

But as the knife held so unfalteringly was about to fall, "the angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven, and said, ... Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham

lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son."

"Henceforth," says Professor Geikie, "it was proved, that the lonely follower of Jehovah was not behind the servants of Baal in self-surrender to his God. But it was also taught that, while the God of Abraham had a right to demand even such a sacrifice as that of an only son, a limit was fixed to the impulse in man to offer his best, and a sacredness stamped on human life."

The next scene in Abraham's life is when, mourning for his beloved wife, he meets the "children of Heth," to buy a cave to bury Sarah in. We can picture the group, who, in Eastern fashion, met Abraham outside the town-gate, dressed in loose gowns, like those of the Assyrians, reaching the ankles, their beards long and their hair curled. Compliments pass in oriental style. Abraham is made welcome, as a great man, to choose any of their sepulchres, though perhaps then, as now, the gift was only a form. An Arab gives his house, field, or horse to-day, as in Abraham's time, to the purchaser; but it is well known that this is only a form to help him raise the price in the end. "What is that between me and thee?" says the seller, just as Ephron said to Abraham. In the end Abraham buys the cave of Machpelah (a double cave, as the name signifies) and the field in which it stood, weighing the money before the witnesses. This cave, where undoubtedly rest the remains of the three patriarchs and their wives, lies on the east edge of Hebron. A Christian church was built over it, but has been converted into a mosque. An outside stair leads up to a floor above the level of the cave, and on this are raised empty tombs, as monuments to the dead below. Each is enclosed in a separate shrine, closed with gates or railings; those of the tombs of Abraham and Sarah, of silver. The shrine of Abraham is encased in marble, and contains a so-called tomb, raised about six feet high and hung with three carpets embroidered with gold. The "tombs" of Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, and Leah are also shown, but are much like Abraham's, only not so rich. But the real tombs no one is allowed to enter; only one European, an Italian architect, has ever seen more than this upper floor, and he only caught sight of white sarcophagi in the cave below.

THE BRIDE FROM HARRAN.

GENESIS XXIV.

Isaac, Sarah's gentle, obedient son, did not marry till three years after his mother's death. He was then a man of forty years, but he was still "the lad" to his father, and it is Abraham who sets to work to find a wife for Isaac. The father is very anxious his one son, in whom the nations are to be blessed, should have a wife from among his own people; so he calls Eliezer, his chief servant, and asks him to swear by a solemn oath that he will go "to the city of Nahor"—the Harran where Abraham himself had lived—to find a wife for Isaac. He seems afraid that, unless the man solemnly swears to go to the distant city, he may bring a woman from some nearer tribe. Eliezer hesitates: "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?"

But Abraham will not let Isaac leave the land of promise; nor does he tell Eliezer to persuade the girl by any account of Isaac's position as the only son of a great chief. The simple faith that has won him the name of El Khalil, relies on God alone: "The Lord God of heaven which took me from my father's house . . . shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence."

Eliezer then gives the required oath and starts on his journey, taking "ten camels of the camels of his master."

It is a remarkable fact that, though other less useful animals are praised in the Bible, the camel has not one word of commendation given it. The fact is the camel is unloving and unloved. He is quarrelsome, revengeful, and utterly stupid, except in the matter of paying back one whom he considers his enemy. Yet he is wonderfully adapted for desert life; his feet are fitted for the shifting sand; he can close his nostrils at will, so that not a grain of sand can enter them; the hump on his back is a lump of fat which supports life for him, when he would starve but for that reserved fund, while he has sacs or pouches connected with

ELIEZER AND REBEKAH.

his stomach, in which he carries a supply of water. A camel can go easily three days without drinking, and longer if necessary. As to food, he likes good living as well as the horse or ox, but he can make a comfortable meal off bare branches and dried leaves. "About as nutritious," says a traveller, "as if he were to eat a green cotton umbrella and a copy of the *Times*." Some years ago a number of camels were imported to New York, but all died except one pair, which were taken to Nevada, and there flourished, so that there are now a considerable number of them in the West. But we must return to Eliezer on the way to Harran.

He carried with him jewels of silver and of gold, and no doubt one camel was provided with a bridal throne, as is still the fashion in the East. At last the city of Nahor was reached. Bethuel, Nahor's son, was a well-known man, for he had shepherds and flocks scattered far outside the city: but Eliezer remembered what his master had said as to "the angel" going before, and so asked God for a sign to guide him. He halted by the well outside the city gate, and asked that the girl whom he should choose might give him water in answer to his request, and offer also to water his camels.

In the East, to this day, the daughters of an Arab chief go to the wells for water, and the meeting each other at the common well is a pleasant event in the day. Eliezer saw a beautiful young girl go down the steps of the well, fill her pitcher, and, lifting it on her shoulder, walk up again. He ran to meet her, and said, "Let me sip, I pray thee, a little water out of thy pitcher." But she said, promptly and kindly, "drink (not sip), my lord," and she hasted to let down her pitcher upon her hand, that he might quench his thirst. "I will draw for thy camels also, until they are done drinking," she added. It was no slight trouble to go up and down those steps, bearing each time a pitcher of water, which she emptied into the trough (frequently still found near such wells), until the camels had received enough.

Here was the very sign! But still Eliezer "held his peace," watching the graceful girl. When the camels were satisfied, he took a golden ornament for the forehead (still worn in the East), and two armlets, and putting them on the girl, as a thank-offering for her kindness, asked who was her father, and whether he could find lodging at his house.

"I am the daughter of Bethuel," she answered; "we have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in."

Eliezer was eagerly welcomed, especially by Laban, Rebekah's brother, who was greedy for gain, and therefore attracted by the wealth of the caravan. The description of Laban's hospitality is as true of Arabian life now as then. Dr. Robinson, when travelling in Palestine, says that his Arab host proposed that a servant should wash his feet; "a female Arabian slave accordingly brought water which she poured upon our feet, over a large shallow basin of tinned copper, kneeling before us, and rubbing our feet with her hands, and wiping them with a napkin."

"And there was set meat before him to eat." Even when the host is a man of rank, he brings in some particular dish himself, and remains standing during the meal, directing the servants.

But Eliezer cannot eat till he has told them his errand. "I am Abraham's servant," he begins—not so humbly as it sounds to us, for to be the confidential servant of such a chief was an honor. He tells how God has guided him to Rebekah, and finishes by asking for her, as a wife for Isaac. Rebekah herself is not consulted; for, in the East, the consent of the maiden is never sought; her marriage is settled by others for her. The father and mother must agree as to the betrothal; but it is also necessary that Laban should consent to it, for daughters cannot be married among Arab tribes, even now, without the approval of their brothers. The answer is favorable, and the next morning Eliezer is eager to start back. But Laban and the mother say the young girl should tarry at least a few days—the thing is so sudden! Eliezer pleads to go, and they leave it to Rebekah to decide. She, caring more for jewels and honor as a chief's bride than for brother or mother, says at once, "I will go." The scene of her departure is often repeated in the East. A missionary writes: "The mother comes to take leave. She weeps, and tenderly embraces her, saying, 'My daughter, I shall see you no more; remember your mother.' The brother enfolds his sister in his arms and promises soon to come and see her. The father is absorbed in thought, and is only aroused by the sobs of the party. He then affectionately embraces his daughter, and tells her not to fear." As Rebekah had her nurse to accompany her, so, at this day, the *aya* who has from infancy brought up the bride, goes with her to the new scene. She is her adviser, her assistant, and friend, and to her she will tell all her hopes and all her fears.

When, after many days, they approached the end of their journey, they saw a man walking alone. Rebekah, as the custom still is in the East, gets down

from her camel before the stranger, and when Eliezer tells her "It is my master," she veils herself, for the husband must not see his bride for the first time before others.

"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

Isaac's life was very different from either his father's or that of his sons. He never left the Promised Land. Once, when there was a famine in Canaan, he seems to have thought of going down to Egypt, as his father had done, but the Lord appeared unto him, and said: "Go not down into Egypt," and he obeyed. He was fond of farming and very successful in it, the Bible recording that he reaped "an hundred fold." He was patient and gentle; for, when the Philistines filled up the wells which Abraham had dug, Isaac did not make the matter a cause for quarrelling, but dug them again. Rather than have any contention, he gave up a living spring to the Philistines and moved to another place. He seems never to have had the trials that tested his father and his son Jacob, but to have led a peaceful life, quietly and faithfully serving the God of his father Abraham. He was so obedient that he put his life in his father's hands; so unsuspicious that Rebekah, deceitful and partial, found it easy to mislead him; so devout that even those whom he thought were his enemies came to beg him to enter into a covenant with them, because, they said, "we see certainly that the Lord is with thee."

JACOB, THE SUPPLANTER; ISRAEL, THE PRINCE.

GENESIS XXV., 19, TO CHAP. XXXVI.

ABRAHAM had his wish—Isaac was married to "a daughter of his people;" Sarah's tent was occupied again, her place filled. But again was Abraham's faith tried. He was assured that in his seed the nations should be blessed, and yet, for twenty years, Isaac had no children. What rejoicing there must have been when, at last, their prayers were heard, and God gave Rebekah two boys.

Twin babies! we always think of such as loving each other, and never quarrelling; yet, in real life, it is often far different. These twins were not at all alike in appearance or character. Esau, the first-born, was the rougher and stronger of the two; his red hair grew low on his neck and chest, and the hair on his hands and arms was unusually thick, so that a sensitive touch could feel it. Jacob had smoother skin. As boys, Esau seemed the more promising of the two. He was frank and generous; Jacob was crafty and mean. Jacob was Rebekah's darling; but Isaac, quiet and delicate himself, delighted in his strong, manly Esau, the shaggy, daring hunter. Both, for sixteen years, had the privilege of having their grandfather Abraham with them; but Jacob alone seems to have profited by this, for he it was that longed for "the blessing"—that mysterious blessing that was to extend to all nations.

Every boy growing into manhood may well study these two characters. Esau, free, easy, frank, and good-natured; Jacob, crafty, deceitful, timid. "Yet, fickleness, unsteadiness, weakness, want of faith, and want of principle ruin and make useless Esau's noble qualities; whilst steadfast purpose, resolute sacrifice of the present to the future, and fixed principle, purify, elevate, and turn to lasting good even the bad qualities of the younger brother."

One day when the two brothers were young men, Esau came home late, after the evening meal. Now, in the East, even to this day, no food is kept

from one day to another, owing to the heat; even bread is baked fresh for each meal, and luxuries are seldom used. It chanced that Jacob was preparing a dish of red lentils. Esau, faint from long fasting, did not feel able to prepare food for himself, or even to wait till it was made ready. In his impulsive way, he declared he was dying of hunger. Jacob, watching his chance, as boys say, asked him to sell his birthright for the pottage, and Esau consented.

Years went by. Esau married, at forty, a daughter of Heth; a thing which was a sore grief to Isaac and Rebekah. Isaac, grown old and blind and feeble, thought his death was drawing near; and, wishing to give Esau his blessing, told him to kill venison, make a dish of savory meat for him, and bring it to him. For years he had delighted in Esau's venison, and perhaps it was to please his son that he expressed a wish for it. Esau goes off, but Rebekah has heard, and now she calls Jacob to her. Her dearest boy must have the blessing, at any cost. She tells Jacob to bring her two kids, and she will so cook them that Isaac, whose taste is not keen, will never know them from venison.

Jacob hesitates: "My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing." But Rebekah, ruling her son as she has ruled her husband, says: "Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice."

The meat prepared, Rebekah makes Jacob put on Esau's raiment. Clothed in Esau's garments, with the soft hair of the kids laid on his neck and hands, Jacob takes in the savory food to his father. How Rebekah's heart must have beat when the gentle old man said, "Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau, or not," and how she rejoiced when, having felt the hairy hands, he gave her Jacob the longed-for blessing. Ah! foolish woman! she was to be punished for her deceit. Esau coming in with his venison tells of the cheat, exclaiming, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, the Supplanter?"

But the great blessing has been given, and Isaac can only promise Esau, "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above."

Soon Rebekah begins to reap the fruit of her wrong-doing; Esau looks with hatred on his brother, and plans to kill him. The mother, hearing of this, tells Jacob he must go and stay at Harran with her brother Laban until she sends him word—a word that never came, for Rebekah died without seeing her boy

ISAAC BLESSING JACOB.

again. The reason given to Isaac for this journey is, that Jacob is to go to Harran to find a wife, so he gives him again "the blessing of Abraham."

How Rebekah must have thought of Eliezer and his company as she saw her son go off. Jacob went alone on foot, with only his staff. He walked on till, at Luz, the night coming on, he lay down to rest. No doubt he felt unhappy enough; no doubt he longed for forgiveness, and that the blessing so wrongly won might truly be his; for there God gave him a wonderful dream, showing him that the angels are ministering spirits, sent down to earth on errands of mercy; and there he heard God's voice, telling him, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land."

When Jacob waked in the morning he set up the stone on which he had rested as a pillar, calling the place Bethel, the house of God; and from that day he began to serve God. He made many mistakes—committed many sins after that, but he was never again "the Supplanter," and, after years of trial, earned his glorious name of Israel, a Prince of God.

After many days, Jacob saw, far off, the city of Nahor; and, coming to a well, sat down to rest. This was not the well outside the city, for that had steps, down which Rebekah descended with the pitcher on her shoulder, but one at some distance in the fields, where the flocks were feeding. Doré has given us a good picture of such a well in the one representing Eliezer meeting Rebekah. These wells were always covered by a great stone, to keep the water cool, and, until all who had a right to use it were gathered near, the stone was not taken away. Some of the first-comers told Jacob that Rachel, Laban's daughter, was coming to water her father's sheep. Jacob saw her, rolled the heavy stone away, watered her flock for her, and then, telling her he was Rebekah's son, kissed her.

From that moment Jacob loved Rachel; loved her so dearly, that, though Laban made him work seven years before he could marry her, the time seemed short, since he could see her, and talk with her. Laban's crafty, selfish conduct was a good lesson to Jacob—no doubt he often thought of how he had bargained with Esau. But, after the seven years, Laban veiled Leah, and married her to Jacob. When Jacob angrily upbraids him, Laban tells him that the custom of the country is that the eldest sister must marry first, but says Jacob may have Rachel

too as a wife, if he will promise to work seven years more in payment. Jacob consents, and both sisters are given to him. Leah is described as blear-eyed, but she was gentle and good, and God blessed her, giving her children to love her.

At last, after twenty years, the Lord said unto Jacob, "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee." "Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels. And he carried away all his cattle, and all the goods which he had gotten, . . . for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan." Even after twenty years Jacob feared to meet his brother, and sent messengers before him. An Eastern missionary writes: "I almost think I hear Jacob telling his servants what they were to say to Esau. He would repeat it many times over, and then ask, 'What did I say?' until he had completely schooled them into the story. They would be most attentive, and, at every interval, some of the most officious would be repeating the tale. The head servant, however, would be specially charged with the delivery of the message. When they went into the presence of Esau they would make much of Jacob's saying, 'The present is sent unto my lord.' . . . . He, feeling himself thus acknowledged as *lord*, seeing the servants of his brother before him, and knowing that all of his people had witnessed the scene, would consider himself greatly honored."

The servants returned, saying that Esau was coming to meet his brother with four hundred men. Jacob was greatly troubled; but he had learned where to look for help, and turned to the God whom he had promised to serve so many years before. He acknowledged his unworthiness, but claimed the promised blessing. The next day he sent large presents of camels and sheep and oxen, that Esau might receive the gifts before they should meet, a custom still kept up in the East; and that night he prayed again. We are told that One wrestled with him, whom Jacob refused to let go till he gave Him a blessing. The stranger asked his name, and said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." The worldly Jacob had at last become the saintly Israel. He who had power with God need not fear his brother. Esau met him lovingly, exchanging presents with him. As the elder brother did not care to till the fields that Isaac had planted, there was no strife between them. After Jacob had been settled in the vale of Shechem for some years, Rachel, his dearly loved wife, died, leaving a baby boy (his twelfth son), whom he called Benjamin, and loved only less than his darling Joseph.

SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

GENESIS XXXVII. and XXXIX.

JOSEPH was Jacob's eleventh son, and for fifteen years the youngest child; so it is not surprising that he was his father's favorite. What is rather surprising is that he was not spoiled by the petting. It did not do him any good, though, for we read of his telling tales about his older brothers, which could not have been any more right then than now. But, though perhaps a little spoiled by unwise partiality, Joseph was a manly, God-fearing, obedient boy. God sent him wonderful dreams, which he seemed to understand, or at least, value, even when a boy. Two of these dreams he repeated to his brothers, and they were not at all pleased with them.

Jacob's sons were shepherds and farmers, and Joseph was trained by the older brothers in the care of the flocks, and taught to reap and bind the grain. Though Jacob showed partiality in dressing Joseph in a coat with sleeves and reaching to the feet, while the other sons wore short, sleeveless coats, he was not so foolish as to let the boy grow up in idleness. One of the dreams which Joseph told his brothers refers to his daily life. "Behold," he said, "we were binding sheaves in the field; and lo! my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about and made obeisance to my sheaf."

It was easy to interpret such a dream,—the mere fact of the boy telling it gave it value—so the brothers, already envious of Joseph's coat, and the special favor shown to him, sneeringly replied, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou have dominion over us?" And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words.

He was a willing, obedient lad; for when his father proposed to send him to Shechem to see how matters were going with the elder brothers, though he must have often experienced unkindness from them, he answered promptly, "Here am I." How little the boy or the old man foresaw, as they kissed each other good bye,

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

that nearly fifteen years were to go by before they should meet again. How good it was that they did not know! for Joseph needed to go through those years of trouble, to save his people and to learn to trust only in God.

So the boy started out, wearing his sleeved and embroidered coat; which, perhaps, was a sign that he was to be the heir; to have peculiarly, "the blessing of Abraham." It was no small journey for a boy of seventeen, for Shechem was sixty miles from Hebron, but no doubt Joseph knew the road well, and had friendly intercourse with some of the people living by the way. He saw no sign of his brothers and their flocks at Shechem, and heard that they had gone about ten miles farther north, to Dothan. He followed on at once, catching sight of them in the far distance; while one of the brothers, happening to look toward the south, saw the familiar figure in the coat which distinguished him from other shepherd lads.

"Behold the Dreamer!" he exclaims. Oh, how lightly brothers fall into the habit of sneering and calling each other names! How the words lead to actions; till, now and again, we are startled to hear that a man has betrayed or murdered his own brother! As Joseph walked toward them, no doubt he knew that teasing and sneering, perhaps even blows, awaited him; but little did he suspect the truth. Even when the wicked brothers had bound him, and lowered him into one of the dry wells or cisterns that were so frequent in that country, he probably thought it was only a little rougher treatment than usual. He hears them talking at their meal—eating the very food he has brought them, and giving him none. Then he hears a distant sound. Ah, some one is coming—a company—for, far down in the earth as he is, Joseph can hear the murmur of the approaching caravan. He prays to God for help, and listens. God has heard. They are coming to get him out. But what is his horror to find that he is only drawn up to be sold as a slave. Poor boy! he feels as if God has deserted him. He begs and prays, but it is of no use. The money is counted out, and he is hurried away. "Now see what will become of your dreams!" the brothers cry, tauntingly; but the cry is a reminder. He tries to pray to Him who has sent him those "Visions in the night," and grows calmer

It was a company of Ishmaelites who had bought Joseph. They were going down into Egypt with spices, which always commanded a ready sale, as great quantities were used in embalming and for incense. The merchants paid about fifteen dollars for the lad, the usual price for a slave of Joseph's age. Syrian, or

white slaves, were particularly valued in Egypt in Joseph's time, and he was probably treated very kindly by the Ishmaelites, as he would be more valuable if bright and well.

The first sight of an Egyptian city must have interested Joseph, in spite of his homesickness and anxiety. Here is a description of Memphis, the city where Joseph lived as a slave:

"Memphis, the capital of the Empire in the time of Joseph, lay on the west side of the Nile, about twelve miles south of the present Cairo. Its area, like that of all Eastern cities, was large in proportion to its population, embracing a circuit of at least fifteen miles; but in this was included much open ground, laid out as gardens, besides space for public buildings, temples, and palaces, and the barracks of the garrison, in the quarter known as the 'White Castle.' Within the walls stood the old palace of the kings, a stately structure of brick, with courts, corridors, chambers, and halls without number, verandah-like out-buildings of gaily painted wood, and a magnificent pillared banqueting hall. Beautiful gardens surrounded it, and a whole host of laborers tended the flower-beds and shady alleys, the shrubs and the trees, or kept the tanks clean, and fed the fishes. The climate was wonderfully healthy, and the soil fertile, while the views from the walls were famous among both the Greeks and the Romans. Bright green meadows stretched round the city, threaded everywhere by canals, thick with beds of the lotus flower. Trees of such girth that three men could not encircle them with outstretched arms rose in clumps; the wide gardens supplied Rome with roses even in winter, and the gay vineyards yielded wine of which even the poets sang."

It was in this beautiful city that Joseph was sold to Potiphar, who was the "Captain of the Guard"—that is, the head officer over all the police of the city. Every wealthy family in Egypt had a confidential slave who was put in charge of the house-servants. Paintings show us that wherever grain is being measured or metal weighed, or building or agricultural work is going forward, the head overseer of the household is found with a short rod, or a writing-tablet in his hand and a pen behind his ear, to take down the number of sheaves, or of casks, or of the cattle or flocks, and, like Joseph, he is expressly described as "the overseer."

We know, from the inscriptions and pictures on their tombs, just how Egyptians lived in the time of Joseph. The following is a description of such a house as Potiphar's: "The mansions of noble Egyptians stood within high walls, deco-

rated with paintings; the entrance being by a huge gate, flanked at each side by lofty poles from which floated long streamers. The gate opened on a wide, paved court-yard, along the sides of which ran covered walks, supported on slender, painted, wooden columns. A second high doorway at the back of this court led into the vast gardens of the mansion, with rows of fruit trees and trellised vines, clumps of shrubs, beds of flowers and of vegetables. Palms, sycamores, and acacia trees, figs, pomegranates, and jasmine grew in luxuriance; a large tank in the middle of the ground supplying abundant water for the roots of the trees and for the plants, and numerous gardeners seeing that all were duly cared for, and that the canals which led the water from the Nile were kept full by the labors of oxen, turning water-wheels into them day and night.

"At one side of this paradise rose the mansion, sometimes of vast extent, but generally but one story high. Almost all the rooms on the ground floor had separate doors, opening into a verandah supported by colored wooden columns, and running the whole length of the garden side of the house. A long row of store-rooms, running at a right angle to this, closed the view behind, and hid away the garden produce, the wine jars, and the larder of the establishment. The outside of the mansion, like the enclosing wall, was decorated with paintings or ornamental designs.

"The furniture was in keeping with the building. Couches, sofas, and lounges, often of precious woods encrusted with ebony or ivory and set off with gilding, were beautifully carved into the shapes of lions, sphinxes, horses, and other animals, and there was a profusion of tables of all sizes and designs, and elegantly carved chairs. On the sideboard, tables, and consoles stood artistically worked drinking vessels of many forms; beautiful vases of gold, bronze, rock-crystal, or other precious material, filled with flowers, were everywhere. The foot sank in the thick carpets that covered the floors, or trod on the skins of lions and other beasts. Troops of slaves and officials waited upon their lord; a band of priests took charge of the religious rites of the household, and crowds of servants, male and female, fulfilled the different duties of their stations."

In such a house as this we leave Joseph as confidential slave.

FROM A PRISON TO A PALACE.

GENESIS XXXIX., XL., AND XLI.

JOSEPH did not long enjoy the honors and privileges of his position as overseer of Potiphar's household. A false charge was brought against him. He could not prove himself innocent of abusing the trust which his master had confided to him, and was thrown into prison in a great citadel, called the White Castle. But even here his good conduct won him friends; and soon the jailor, finding he could trust him, let Joseph have many privileges. He seems to have helped attend on other prisoners; for, noticing one day that two men, who were confined together, were particularly sad, Joseph asked them what was their trouble. When you read of these men as the chief butler and baker, you must understand that they were cultivated Egyptian gentlemen.

Mohammedans have a tradition as to the imprisonment of these two officials which is worth repeating. "A foreign king, then at war with Egypt, sent an ambassador, seemingly for the purpose of negotiating a peace, but in reality to seek the means of killing the Egyptian sovereign. A woman of his own country, living in Egypt, whom he consulted, told him that the best course of proceeding was to bribe either the chief cook or the chief butler to poison his master. The ambassador therefore made the acquaintance of both; but, finding the chief cook the more tractable, he at last succeeded by a bribe in gaining him over to his purpose. He then prepared for his departure, and called on his countrywoman, intending to tell her of the chief cook's promise. She was not alone, and he could only say that he had every reason to be gratified by his success. These words of the ambassador soon reached the ears of the king; and as they could not be referred to his mission, since the negotiation for peace had come to nothing, a secret of some kind was suspected. The woman was tortured until she confessed all she knew; but, as she could not say which of the two was guilty, the king commanded that both the chief cook and the chief butler should

be cast into prison until it could be found out which had accepted the bribe." The prisoners had each had a dream, and were feeling particularly sad because they could not obtain their interpretations from a priest. Egyptians attached great importance to dreams, and their priests professed to interpret them by consulting holy books, and performing magical rites. How strangely to the superstitious Egyptians must have sounded the young prisoner's answer to their craving for an interpreter: "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me them, I pray you."

The butler dreamed that he plucked grapes from three branches, pressed the juice into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the drink to the king. Joseph, on hearing the butler's dream, told its meaning: "Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head and restore thee unto thy place, and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand after the former manner when thou wast his butler;" adding an earnest appeal to the officer to remember him (Joseph) when he is restored. The way in which he refers to his past life is a lesson to us; he tells the facts, but mentions no names—he was cured of tale bearing! "For, indeed, I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." How well it was that he did not complain of his brothers, for then Pharaoh would have disliked them and would have refused to see them.

The baker's dream was next interpreted. How hard it must have been to tell the poor man that in three days he was to be killed, and his body exposed to the vultures. Death itself was really nothing to an Egyptian, compared to refusing to embalm his body; for they believed that the existence of the soul depended upon the preservation of the body.

In three days the great national holiday of the birthday of the king occurred. The king was worshipped as divine, and so his birthday was most sacred. On that day many prisoners were released, and all happened as Joseph had foretold. We can imagine how he hoped and longed to hear from the butler. "He is too busy yet, I won't expect it to-day," he would say to himself, to keep up hope. But, as months went by, as a year passed on, and then became two, Joseph despaired, and knew that he was forgotten.

Yes, by the chief butler; but "God had him in remembrance," and he grew to depend entirely upon the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

Suddenly there is a great stir and commotion in the prison of the White Castle. Messengers from Pharaoh are enquiring for Joseph. He is given to a

JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAM.

company of priests, who, to his surprise, begin to purify or "cleanse" him, as if he himself were a priest! What does it mean?

"The king has had a strange dream; no one can divine it, and his chief butler declares that you are a wonderful interpreter. But beware! a slave who pretends to priestly knowledge, must prove that knowledge good, or is punished by instant death." Does Joseph tremble? No; he has begun to see that the "hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass," and has learned, by long experience, that it is good that "a man should hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

The purification that Joseph had to undergo, was the shaving of every hair from his head and person; and being bathed and clothed in spotless linen. The hair and beards of Egyptians were always false, as no one could approach Pharaoh unless perfectly shaved.

At last all is ready; the young man stands before Pharaoh, who says, "I have heard say of thee that thou canst understand a dream, to interpret it."

How calmly Joseph turns aside any claim to merit or sanctity. "It is not in me; GOD shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Then he listens, as Pharaoh tells him of the seven fat kine who were devoured by the seven lean kine, and of the seven full ears consumed by the seven blasted ears. Without a moment's hesitation Joseph tells the meaning of the dream: "Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt; and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine shall consume the land."

It was, no doubt, because the interpretation was so terrible that the priests had not dared to give it, even if they had some suspicion of it. It was not easy to tell the king that his kingdom was to suffer from a terrible famine. Here is an account of such a famine as Joseph foretold, which will help us to realize what an awful prophecy it must have been to Pharaoh. "The famine began. Large numbers emigrated. The poor ate carrion, corpses, and dogs. They went further, devouring even little children. The eating of human flesh became so common as to excite no surprise; the people spoke and heard of it as an indifferent thing. As for the number of the poor that perished from hunger and exhaustion, God alone knows what it was. A traveler often passed through a large village without seeing a single living inhabitant. In one village we saw the dwellers of each house extended dead;—the husband, the wife, and the children. The road between Egypt

and Syria was like a vast field, sown with human bodies; or, rather, like a plain which has just been swept by the scythe of the mower. It had become as a banquet hall for the birds, wild beasts, and dogs, which gorged on their flesh."

If Joseph had had no relief to offer, his interpretation would have been terrible; but he adds, "Now, therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man, discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. . . . . and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years."

Pharaoh at once replies: "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled. Only in the throne will I be greater than thou." So, in one short hour, the imprisoned slave is made next in rank to the king. He receives Pharaoh's signet ring; is admitted to the order of the priests; and, placed in the second royal chariot, is driven through the streets of Memphis, that all may know they are to be ruled by him. He is given an Egyptian name: Zaphnath Paaneah, "the man to whom secrets are revealed." And, as a crowning honor, he is married to Asenath, the daughter of the high priest of On. This was the time of temptation to Joseph, for he was young—not yet thirty—and raised suddenly to power and glory. But, through all, he never forgot that he was the servant of God. "God did send me," seems the motto of his life. When his first-born is laid in his arms, he cries out, "God hath made me forget my sorrow;" and when another son is given, he still thanks God who has so blessed him.

His was a busy, happy life. He travelled "throughout all the land. . . . . and gathered up all the food of the seven years," and then stood ready to preserve life, by the help of God. A life that is full of thought for others, of high aims and lofty purposes, whether it be spent on a throne or in a garret, is a happy life. Look through the record of history. Those kings and rich men are happy who are employed in doing good, in helping those to right who suffer wrong, or in learning something of the great secrets of Nature; while, from Bible times to this day, kings and common men, who have lived simply to enjoy themselves—to heap up riches, and to oppress the poor—have lived feverish, unsatisfactory lives, and generally ended miserably. Which would you choose? Like Joseph, feeling that God has sent you before, to save life, and living for others; or, like Herod, craving riches and distinction, till he hears the shout of "a God—a God!" and, taking the glory to himself, perishes miserably?

TESTED AND FORGIVEN.

GENESIS XLII., XLIII., XLIV., XLV.

We must now turn back to the old man waiting for the return of his favorite boy. It may be Jacob feels uneasy after the lad has passed out of sight, and summons a servant to recall him. Then he shakes his head, and says to himself, "Let him go—the boy must do a man's work. Rachel would not have me spoil him if she were here;" and he tries to forget his uneasiness in playing with little Benjamin. But at last a servant tells him, "Master, thy sons approach;" and the father hurries out to see them coming up the hill. What a goodly sight they are. How proud he feels of his twelve sons. He looks for Joseph's boyish figure—so different from the bearded men—but cannot find it. No matter—a moment more, and Rachel's boy will be by his side.

"Father, this have we found," says Simeon, holding up a torn, bloody garment; "know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." With beating heart Jacob holds the tattered cloth. Ah, he knows too well whose it is. "It is my son's coat," he cries, "an evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces!" and he mourns, refusing comfort.

How much more than Joseph are the guilty brothers to be pitied! An unconfessed sin, how heavy a burden it is! But yet, as years go by, life goes on, and sometimes they have almost forgotten the awful sin. At last comes a time of famine. Strangers, passing, tell how, in Egypt alone, there is corn; and the brothers look guiltily at each other, blushing at the mere name of Egypt. But when things grow very desperate, Jacob himself insists on their going down into Egypt to buy corn. He sends all but Benjamin. He, ever since that dreadful day when, a child of two years old, he was told "Joseph is not," has never gone far from home, but is cherished tenderly, the one child of Jacob's old age.

Twelve years have made some changes on each of those ten faces, but their costume easily distinguishes them. The simple shepherds feel awkward and coun-

JOSEPH MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN.

tryfied in the great city of Memphis, and would gladly buy corn of some merchant; but they are told that no one but the great Zaphnath-paaneah has corn to sell. So, tremblingly, shamefacedly, they enter the king's palace, and bow down before this great man. "And Joseph knew his brethren." How their shepherd's dress, their staves, their beautiful long beards, recall the old home scenes. There is Reuben,—he almost calls him by name,—but he remembers in time. As they bow down, his heart swells with love and pity;—how, in spite of themselves, they are fulfilling his dream! With a beating heart, he sees that no boy is among them; and, speaking through an interpreter, accuses them of being spies, knowing that at that word they will give their full history. At once comes the longed-for answer. "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."

Then Joseph, impatient for a sight of Benjamin, pretends to still think them spies, and insists that one shall return and bring the youngest brother. On their refusing this, they are thrown in prison for three days. Then he calls them again, and tells them that they can return if they consent to leave one brother as a hostage in his hands. How his heart swells and the tears rise as he hears them, in real penitence, say: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."

At last Simeon is left, and the others return to bring Benjamin. Joseph commands that each man's money shall be put in his sack, and there, to their dismay, they find it on their arrival. Jacob refuses to give up Benjamin, till, at last, death from starvation is so near, that he is driven to let his darling go. The old father himself sends a little present to the great man; (think how Joseph must have treasured that "little balm and a little honey, spices, myrrh, nuts, and almonds,") and once more they reach Egypt, talking sadly of the sin that has weighed so heavily of late on their hearts.

To their astonishment and bewilderment, instead of being received in the public reception room of the palace, they are told that the great man wishes to meet them at his own house, at dinner! They stare in dismay; and indeed it is no wonder, for a state dinner, in the days of Egypt's greatness, was a very grand and formal affair. "The dining chamber was a decorated hall, resplendent with color and gilding, and furnished with regal magnificence. Slaves laid gar-

lands of roses round the shoulders of the guests, and put wreaths of lotus blossoms on their heads, while others handed them wine and food from side-boards, loaded with every delicacy, and decked with flowers. Choirs of musicians entered the chamber during the dessert, and played on harps, lutes, small drums, and flutes, the conductor beating time with his hands, and the company joining with measured clappings."

The brothers are so troubled about the money which they had found in their sacks, that they go to the entrance of Joseph's house and assure his overseer of their honesty. The steward, or overseer, quiets their fears, assuring them that their God must have returned the money, as he had received the payments himself. So, somewhat relieved, they come to the dinner, bringing with them their father's present.

Joseph controls himself, asking after his father: "The old man of whom ye spake, is he yet alive?" but when he catches sight of the boy of fourteen, whom he had last fondled as a baby of two, he has to hurry from the room to hide his tears.

At last they are all seated—each one according to his age, as the brothers notice with surprise. Joseph, being high in rank, eats alone, and the Egyptian guests have a separate table, for an Egyptian could not eat with a foreigner. But Joseph sends portions from his table to each of the strangers, only heaping the most upon Benjamin. The feast was, after all, a very pleasant one, and, having bought their corn, the eleven sons start on their homeward way. But hardly had they gone a half day's journey when they hear shouts and cries, and, looking back, see Joseph's overseer hurrying after them, with a number of men and officers. They wait for him, and, to their surprise, he breaks out into a torrent of reproach. "After the kindness our lord showed you, how dared you steal his cup?"

"His cup?" they exclaim. "What do you mean? Come, search us, and whoever has done this, let him die, and the rest of us will be your lord's bondsmen."

The overseer begins with Reuben's sack, and, searching each in turn, finds nothing in ten of them. The brothers exclaiming, at each failure, "Did not we tell you? What a shame to suspect us of such wickedness!" But their faces grow white, and their eyes fixed, as the boy Benjamin's sack is opened, and the cup lifted out.

You see, Joseph wants to find out if the brothers, who had treated him so wickedly, would desert his little brother in any trouble. But they stand the test well. When they are brought again to Joseph, Judah speaks, for it is he who had taken special charge of the lad. Read his speech (Genesis xliv. 18), and you will not wonder that Joseph "could not refrain himself;" but, making all his courtiers and officers leave the hall, made himself known to his brethren.

"I am Joseph!" he cries, and in his excitement asks again, "Does my father live?" But there is no answer. The guilty men start back in fear, while Benjamin cannot believe that Joseph has risen from the dead. But, after a little, the lad gains courage, and comes near. The wonderful story draws him to the kindly, beautiful man; "and then Joseph fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck," and soon afterwards all were weeping and talking together.

Pharaoh was soon told that Joseph had found his own people, and, princely in his gifts and hospitality, he invited the whole tribe to live in Egypt in the "land of Goshen." They started once more, with wagons, and asses, and camels, "laden with good things;" and when Israel saw the wagon which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived; and Israel said: "It is enough—Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

FROM A PALACE TO A WILDERNESS.

EXODUS I., II., III., AND IV.

FOR four hundred years the descendants of Israel—the Hebrews, as they called themselves—lived in Goshen, which is in the north-east corner of Egypt; that part which lies nearest to Palestine. They gradually gave up their tent life, and the care of flocks, learning agriculture and the various trades and arts of Egypt. For we find them skilled in weaving, engraving on precious stones, reading, writing, etc., and only the tribes of Reuben, Manasseh, and Gad were shepherds after their return to Palestine.

The Pharaoh that invited the Hebrews to live in Egypt was one of those shepherd kings who conquered the Egyptians, and reigned over them for five hundred years. Every king in Egypt was called Pharaoh (Child of the Sun); but the different dynasties were called by different names, just as in England we speak of the reign of the Plantagenets, the Stuarts, etc. The shepherd kings of Egypt were called the Hyksos. They would naturally have friendly feelings toward a tribe of shepherds such as the Hebrews; and, as long as the Hyksos remained on the throne, the Hebrews were probably treated as well as the Egyptians. But the common people in Egypt led a miserable, hard life. Indeed, there were really no "people" in Egypt—only slaves.

At length the Egyptians rebelled against the Hyksos, and restored the native line of Pharaohs. It may be the Hebrews had fought for the Hyksos; at any rate they were oppressed and enslaved by the new kings. These kings were great warriors, and probably many of the fighting men of the Hebrews served in their armies; but after a time a Pharaoh—Ramses II.—was seated on the throne, who cared more for raising great buildings, and wonderful statues of himself sixty-five feet high, than for foreign conquest. He founded towns, dug canals, and filled the land with colossi (large statues), sphinxes, and other wonders. Thirty thousand men died in this very century in digging out the Mahmoudieh Canal with their hands,

without picks or spades or wheelbarrows—falling, worn out with the toil exacted from them, by the blows of the taskmasters. Saddest of all, through these four hundred years, the Israelites had almost forgotten the name of the true God. Many of them had learned to worship the gods of the Egyptians, under the different forms of the bull, the goat, the cat, the crocodile, etc. But the very hardships of their life led them at last to turn and cry out unto the God of Abraham.

Ramses II. was but a boy when his father, Seti I., alarmed at the way the Hebrews were increasing, made a law that every boy baby of that race should be drowned. It is not likely that that law was very rigidly enforced after Seti moved away from Tanis, the capital of Goshen; but, while it was in full power, Amram, the "kindred of the lofty one," and Jochebed, "she whose glory is Jehovah," had a little son born. These people were of the tribe of Levi, which from the first learned all they could of the arts and sciences of the Egyptians. They had already two children, Miriam, a girl of twelve, and Aaron, who was three years old. The mother hid her baby from the Egyptians for three months; but then, as their enemies had learned of the birth of the little one, she had either to let him be put to death by the police, or trust him to the God to whom she prayed. So she took a large basket, and, lining and covering it with pitch to make it waterproof, laid her baby in the little ark and carried it down to one of the broad canals of Tanis, where it floated among the papyrus reeds. She dared not linger near; but Miriam would not be suspected, so she was left to watch. Thermouthis, a sister of Seti I. (daughter of the last Pharaoh), coming to the stream with her maids, to bathe, noticed the little ark, and, touched by the baby's beauty, determined to adopt him. She looked round for a nurse, and quick-witted little Miriam brought her mother to care for the boy, whom the princess named Moses, from Mo (water) and Uses (the saved one).

Up to forty years of age Moses lived in the palace, or in one of the great temple-schools where the boys of the wealthy were educated by the priests. Professor Geikie thus describes the palace where Moses lived so long. "The palace was more like a little town than a house. It stood near the Nile, amidst surrounding gardens. On each side of a large structure which contained the state rooms and banqueting hall, were three rows of pavilions of different sizes. These were connected with each other by colonnades, or by little bridges, under which flowed canals that watered the garden, and made the palace look like a town upon islands. The

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.

principal part of the palace was built of light, Nile-mud bricks, and elegantly carved woodwork. The walls and pillars, the galleries and colonnades, and even the roofs, blazed with many colors, and at every gate rose tall masts, from which red and blue flags streamed when the king was 'in residence.' The rooms were high and airy, and the furniture consisted of costly but simple necessaries." The gardens below the windows were as wonderful as all else; they formed a carpet on which the palace seemed to stand.

How early in Moses' life he knew of his true birth we are not told. The Bible only says, "And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel;" but probably, for many years, he had been watching his own people, and felt that he ought to join them. At last, one day, seeing a Hebrew suffering from the cruelty of an Egyptian, he interfered, and killed the oppressor. No one saw the deed except the Hebrew whom Moses had befriended, and he "supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not." Moses, thinking the Hebrews regarded him as their friend, tried on the next day to make peace between two who were quarrelling. But, to his astonishment, one of them turned on him and said, "Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?"

Try to realize what a disappointment Moses suffered. He had given up all the treasures of Egypt, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," and now these people turned him off, and he had to run away to escape being imprisoned or executed! He escaped to the peninsula of Sinai. In the southern part of this peninsula the Kenites lived, a tribe descended from Abraham through Keturah, his second wife. It was a long and painful journey from Egypt to the well to which the daughters of Jethro-Raguel had brought his flocks to drink. But, though tired, Moses was too courteous to stand by and see the rough shepherds pushing the girls aside. He helped water Jethro's flocks, and the father, when he heard of his kindness, invited him into his tent. The daughters thought Moses an Egyptian, but no doubt he told Jethro his story; and together they talked of that promise which had been given to Abraham and handed down by a few faithful ones through all the generations. "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."

But Jethro, like Abraham, lived in a tent, and his riches were flocks and herds. Moses, to live with him, kept the flock. He married Jethro's daughter, Zipporah,

and lived for forty years in the wilderness. He had been trained for forty years in worldly wisdom, and then he was sent out to live a rough, hard life among simple folk. Do not you think he must often have felt discouraged, and as if his life were "all a mistake?" But we, who know the whole story, can see how this life in the wilderness prepared him to be the leader of his people. He was up among the mountains, and that always leads an earnest mind to "feel after God." His wanderings with his flocks would make him acquainted with every valley, plain, and mountain of the whole region; with every spring and well, and with all the resources of the wilderness. This education would fit him to guide his race to the safe shelter where they were to wander so long.

The Bible tells us the story of the deliverance of the Hebrews, as God knew it—not as man saw it. So, though we know from the Word of God that he was thinking of his people, and preparing Moses for the work; at the time, the people, no doubt, realized very little of all this. We know that several times they tried to recover their independence; they had leading men among themselves, who kept them all alert and watchful. Aaron was one of these men, and no doubt he had often sent word to his exiled brother as to the state of things in Egypt. Then suddenly God revealed himself to Moses. The Voice, that had not been heard for four hundred years, spoke, as Moses, seeing a bush all aflame, yet not burned, came closer to examine it. "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And then Moses was instructed for his great work. He was not told to prepare his people for war; all was to be done by God. His shepherd's rod, turned by God into a fiery serpent, and then restored to him as a rod, was his emblem of office. The Power that had withered and then restored his hand, that could burn and yet not destroy the dry bush, that power could conquer even Pharaoh.

"And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

DELIVERED FROM BONDAGE.

EXODUS XIII. AND XIV.

RAMSES II. was dead, and Menephtah I., one of his sons, had succeeded him. The Hebrews, longing once more to worship the God of their fathers, desired to offer sacrifices to him. This, if done in Goshen, would have roused the utmost fury of the Egyptians, for bullocks and rams were sacred with them, and worshipped as gods. If such sacrifices were to be offered at all, the Hebrews must be allowed to go outside the kingdom—"three days' journey into the desert." But this moderate request, which Moses made for his people, was refused.

The story of the plagues which God sent upon the Egyptians by the hand of Moses can be read in the Book of Exodus, beginning at the seventh chapter. Remember, as you read of these plagues, that the Nile was not like any ordinary river; it was the only river of that great country, and was worshipped as a god; guided into canals and tanks, it nourished the land, making the "desert blossom as the rose." The frog, too, was embalmed and honored by the Egyptians. The third plague was a kind of "tick," which lives in hot sand and dust, and buries itself in the flesh of men and animals, feeding on their blood. The plague of flies included the beetle, which was a most sacred symbol of the Egyptian religion. The fifth plague—a disease which attacked the cattle—was almost as bad as the tenth, for the Egyptians worshipped the sacred bull, and the calf. The plague of boils, some have thought, was leprosy.

It seems as if Pharaoh could not have resisted, when visited by such plagues; but we must remember that *we* see the hand of God more plainly than he did. It was so easy to say: "This is, after all, only a natural event—it may never happen again," for each plague was one of the ordinary troubles of the country, *increased*. Then, again, the Hebrews were a great nation of slaves, and to have to part with them would be a terrible loss—Pharaoh would not give up. So hail followed, and locusts, then the sun—the god of all gods in Egypt—was hidden;

THE RETURN OF THE ARK.

everywhere but in the land of the Hebrews a darkness settled down for three days. And Pharaoh said: "Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. And Moses said, ... Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind."

This was more than Pharaoh would grant; and he said angrily, that if Moses dared show himself again, he should die. "And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more."

Then there was great preparation among the Hebrews. The elders told them that God's angel was to pass through the land of Egypt that night, to smite all the first-born; but wherever he saw the mark of a lamb's blood on the lintel and side-posts of the door, he would not enter to kill. How anxiously the eldest child must have watched the killing of the Passover lamb. He did not rest, you may be sure, till he saw the marks clearly made upon the door; then, instead of lying down to sleep, all were prepared for a long journey. Some were rich, but the most were very poor. But God gave them favor with their neighbors, and when they asked for dresses and ornaments the Egyptians gave them all they needed. Then, when at midnight a great cry arose from the Egyptians, begging the Israelites to leave the land in haste, as in every Egyptian house one child lay dead, each Hebrew father hurried, by the light of the full April moon, with his wife and children to the appointed meeting-place; his little ones and the sick in the panniers of asses; his cattle driven before him; the unbaked bread, in the family kneading-trough, wrapped up in his sheepskin on his shoulder.

Gathering in different cities and villages throughout Egypt, they all met at Tanis, where Moses led them out. The crowd was not all Hebrew; among them were prisoners of war, shepherd tribes of Goshen, and multitudes of slaves. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night." At first all went well. The very sight of their own numbers gave them courage. They had still fresh water, and plenty of fodder for their cattle. But soon murmurs were heard; they dreaded a battle with the soldiers stationed on the frontier, and Moses, to escape any dangers of battle, led them to the shores of the Red Sea.

As soon as the seventy days of mourning for the dead were over, Pharaoh began to regret having let the children of Israel go. He saw that they meant to stay, for they had taken their sick, and all their possessions; and, hearing that

they were "lost in the wilderness," he ordered out his army of chariots and soldiers, and started in hot pursuit. What had been a slow and toilsome march for the Hebrews, was a short journey for the chariots and their drivers. The Hebrews, who had just broken camp, and were marching toward the sea, saw by the cloud of dust that they were pursued. In their terror, the Hebrews taunted Moses with bringing them out to die. But he answered so calmly that even the children hushed their cries: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians, whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

And most gloriously, as you know, did God fight for his people. Read the song that Moses and the great multitude sang, as they stood on the other side —saved from their enemies.

We cannot follow the Israelites through all their wanderings; but would notice particularly the mountain before which they assembled to receive the law from God himself. Here, on a deep, wide, yellow plain, the people, in their fear and awe, "removed and stood afar off." The mountain, rising like a great altar, in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur, from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of the "mount that might be touched," and from which the voice of God might be heard, far and wide over the stillness of the plain below. Here it was that God spoke the Commandments which he afterward wrote on two tables of stone. The people answered with one voice, "All the words which the Lord hath said, we will do."

Moses then disappeared from the people. They saw him go up into the mount of the Lord; but, day after day, he did not return. Helpless, and lost, without a leader, they demanded that Aaron should make a god for them like those they had known in Egypt; to be, in their eyes, the God who had brought them out from that land, and to go before them instead of Moses. Aaron yielded, and announced a "feast to the Lord"—with the calf, made of their jewels, to worship! Moses, taught of God as to the making of the tabernacle, knew nothing of the sin his people were committing, until God said: "Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves."

Moses, as he saw the people worshipping the calf, threw the tables of the law down, and ordered the idol to be ground to powder, and thrown into the

water. Then, calling for all who were on the side of Jehovah, he was joined by the tribe of Levi, who were told to gird on their swords, and, passing through the host, put down the rebellion at any cost. Before night all were penitent, but three thousand men lay dead. Another punishment followed, for Moses' tent was removed outside the camp, where the cloudy, fiery pillar was seen above it. The people, penitent and humbled, worshipped, standing in the doors of their tents.

Again, for forty days, Moses stayed in the mount; but the people stood the test this time, and he brought back two new tables of the law. Then they set about making the tabernacle, which God had showed Moses in the mount. This was a beautiful movable tent-temple, divided into two rooms by a curtain. In the outer room, or the Holy Place, was the Table of Shewbread, the Altar of Incense, and the Golden Candlestick; while in the Holy of Holies was the Sacred Ark. This ark was made of acacia wood, overlaid within and without with pure gold. Over it was a golden covering, known as the Mercy-seat, with two golden cherubim with outspread wings bending toward the centre. The movement of the mysterious cloud which rested on the tabernacle was the signal for striking or pitching the camp. When it was "taken up from off it," the advance was sounded on silver trumpets by the Levites, Moses repeating the words: "Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee," the whole host re-echoing them far and near. In the same way the descent of the cloud was the sign to halt; and then, as the ark was once more solemnly laid down, the prayer, caught up from the lips of Moses, and intoned by the whole camp, rose up to heaven: "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."

The illustration given with this chapter refers to an event that happened three or four hundred years later than the time of the Exodus. The children of Israel had been defeated in battle by the Philistines, and though they had been forbidden to take the ark out of the tabernacle, they carried it into the next battle, where it was captured by the Philistines. Great was the mourning among the Israelites, and great the joy among their enemies. But the Philistines found that the ark was no blessing to them;—wherever they took it, sickness broke out. At last, to see if it really was the ark that was the cause of their trouble, they put it on a new cart, and yoked two cows to it, whose calves had just been taken from them, letting them go where they would. Instead of turning toward their calves, the cows "went along the highway, lowing as they went, to Beth-she-mesh."

THE HOLY CITY.

1 CHRONICLES XVI.

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
Chief in thy Prince's diadem!
Famous in story, and in song,
While countless ages rolled along;
Of mighty name, of lofty line,
Prophets and priests and kings were thine;
In dust thou long hast cradled them;
Their boast, their home, Jerusalem."—H. W. J.

DAVID did not succeed Saul at once as king of Israel; for seven years and a half he reigned over the tribe of Judah only, and Ishbosheth, Saul's only living son, reigned as king over the other tribes. But Ishbosheth was a very weak, incapable king, and had not been appointed by God. The people were gradually learning to wish for David; and at last, Ishbosheth having been assassinated by two of his enemies, David was chosen king by all Israel, and anointed again amidst great rejoicings. He was thirty-eight years old when, after years of trial, he became ruler of the nation. His first act was to try to buy Jebus from the band of Canaanites who had held it for centuries. But the Jebusites refused to sell the city, and boasted that the place was so strong—built on twin hills, and cut off by deep valleys from the country round—that the lame and blind could keep the Israelites out. David immediately issued a proclamation, promising a great reward to the general who conquered the city; and a storming party, under Joab, clambered up the precipices and gained possession. The Jebusites were allowed to remain on the eastern hill, Mount Moriah; while Zion, the western hill, became the city of David, Jerusalem—"the Place of Peace." The whole nation learned to love this city; and even now, in every synagogue over the world, prayers still go up to God, asking that Jehovah will in mercy return to Jerusalem.

A beautiful palace, worthy of a king, was begun at once on Mount Zion, Hiram, king of Tyre, sending workmen and cedars for the building. The Philistines soon attacked the king; but, shutting himself within his fortified city, he waited till his enemies were under its very walls, in the "Valley of Giants," and then attacked them so furiously that they fled to the sea-plains in confusion, leaving their idols on the field.

Again the Philistines made a second attempt, by the same pass, but the Israelites crept around them and stole upon them, through a wood of mulberry trees. David and his host firmly believed that the murmur of the leaves was the footfall of Jehovah marching before them, to smite their enemies; with such faith the victory was easy, and the Philistines were, before long, so far subdued that David exacted tribute from them.

But the king's principal desire in choosing Jerusalem as his city was to make it a Holy City; and, to do this, he longed to bring the ark—that ark which had been neglected all through Saul's reign—to Jerusalem. Having prepared a beautiful tabernacle (the old tabernacle still remained at Gibeon), he summoned all the tribes to attend the removal of the ark from Kirjath-jearim. All Israel talked of the great event: "We heard men say at Ephratah," in the south of the land, "and we found them repeat it in the woody Lebanon: Let us go into His tabernacle, let us worship at His footstool." The king could not rest till he had found a habitation for the God of Jacob. Men came to the festival from even two hundred and fifty miles away.

The ark was placed on a new cart, drawn by oxen, which showed how the people had forgotten the law of Moses: that law required that the ark should be carried by its poles, by consecrated Levites. The ark left the house of Abinadab, on the hill of Kirjath-jearim, one of his sons, Uzzah, going beside it, and the other, Ahio, going in front. As it moved down the hill the great multitude joined in the procession; bands of singers sang David's psalms, with musicians playing on large and small harps, tambourines, castanets, clarions, and cymbals, David, the king, leading them all. But, passing a spot known as the threshing-floor of Nachon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah, afraid the ark would fall, took hold of it. He sank dead at its side—struck, it is thought, by lightning. David and the people were so dismayed at this that the ark was left in the house of a Levite, Obed-edom.

DAVID MOURNING OVER ABSALOM.

Three months passed by; and again David resolved to bring the ark to Jerusalem. But this time every rule was observed; the ark was carried on its staves by Levites, and none but they were permitted to come near it. The chief men of all Israel were summoned, and nearly one thousand of the most eminent priests and Levites, with the flower of the army and its most famous leaders, were appointed to take part in the procession. The sacred relic, borne on the shoulders of chosen men, at last moved forward, amidst the shouts of assembled thousands repeating the chants of the wilderness life—nearly five hundred years before—"Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered." "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest: thou, and the ark of thy strength." After advancing six paces, a pause was made while bullocks and rams were sacrificed. Then the vast procession once more moved on, amidst loud flourishes of trumpets, blown by mighty warriors, and the anthems of the choirs. The two high-priests—Zadok from Gibeon, and Abiathar from the palace of David—followed in their gorgeous robes; and behind them came long companies of turbaned priests and Levites in spotless white; next came the great captains; next the dignitaries of the land, the princes of Judah and Benjamin, and those of Zebulon and Naphtali.

The ark advanced like the chariot of a great conqueror, ascending the sacred hill in triumph to Jerusalem. The long-drawn peal of the trumpets echoed among the hills around; the shout, as of a victorious host, rang through the valleys; the entrance of the ark into the gates appeared almost like the entrance of Jehovah himself. The procession approached the ramparts amidst chants of priests and Levites, proclaiming the glory of Him who was drawing nigh, and the purity required from all who ascend into his holy hill; then, as if addressing the warders on the walls, a chorus demanded that the gates be thrown open:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Be ye lift up, ye ancient doors;
That the King of Glory may enter in."

But the warders, hesitating, answered with responding chant:

"Who is this King of Glory?"

Then came, in triumphant chords, the reply:

"Jehovah, strong and mighty;
Jehovah, mighty in battle."

Then, as the gates were thrown wide, both choirs united in a grand chorus, singing as the procession swept through:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
Lift them up, ye ancient doors:
And the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory?
Jehovah of Hosts;
He is the King of Glory."

Renewed sacrifices were offered as the ark entered the tent prepared for it, and a magnificent psalm sung (1 Chron. xvi. 8–36), composed by David for the occasion. David then dismissed the multitude with his benediction, and the day closed with great festivities.

Many wars took place with the enemies of Israel during David's reign, but the saddest of all was the civil war, brought about by his son Absalom. The story of this war will be given in the next chapter. The picture here given represents David as he wept for Absalom. He forgot his son's disobedience and deceit the moment he was dead, and could only sob: "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

A REBELLIOUS SON.

2 SAMUEL XVIII.

We must not forget, in reading the Bible, that the Old Testament heroes lived in very different times from ours. What we regard as wicked and coarse, was then thought necessary and right. For instance, David, a man after God's own heart, was still so much a man after the pattern of his age that he showed no mercy to prisoners of war. "He sawed them with saws; cut them with iron cutting-instruments," etc. It was not till Christ came that even believers in God learned to be merciful to their enemies. So, too, David had many wives, and did not see any wrong in it; but these marriages brought him much trouble, for the children of the different wives were constantly quarrelling. Absalom, the second son, killed his elder brother, Amnon; and, though David punished him by exile, he was at last forgiven and allowed to return to Jerusalem.

Absalom was not at all like his father, except in his beauty; he was mean and selfish; but "in all Israel there was none to be praised for his beauty like him." His hair was so admired that what was cut each year was weighed.

Shortly after Absalom had been allowed to return to Jerusalem, David ordered a census to be taken of the people, to see how many he could call to arms. This was known to be an act that God did not approve, and was hateful to all the nation; but David insisted on it, and, after ten months, the census was nearly complete, when the Lord sent Gad, a prophet, to tell David that he might choose one of three punishments for his sin: three years of famine, three months' flight before invaders, or three days of pestilence—which would he choose? David penitently gave answer: "Let us now fall into the hands of Jehovah, for his mercies are great, and let us not fall into the hands of man." So the plague followed. In three days seventy thousand persons died, and an angel was seen on the top of Mount Moriah, the hill just outside of Jerusalem, his hand stretched out to destroy the city. In answer to David's prayer, before Jerusalem was struck the

THE DEATH OF ABSALOM.

plague was stayed, and in memory of this mercy the spot on Mount Moriah was consecrated, and there, in Solomon's time, the temple was erected.

But the nation was estranged from David by the census, and Absalom made the most of the feeling. Whispers sprang up here and there about a new and younger king. They had done well in taking David for Saul—why not now take Absalom for David? The tribe of Judah had never liked David removing the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem. The great tribe of Ephraim, too, did not feel content since the king was of Judah. Absalom dazzled the people by his beauty and royal state. David had been content to ride on a mule; but Absalom had horses and chariots, with running footmen. On the other hand, all bowed low to the king; but Absalom pretended to be more friendly, and would embrace and kiss the people. It was the custom of the king to sit in the gate on certain days, and hear all appeals that were made to him; but it was natural that some were overlooked or delayed, and those who were decided against were vexed. Absalom met all such with hints that if *he* were judge—if *he* had power, things would be different! And so he gradually won the hearts of the people, till, under the pretence of having made a vow to offer sacrifices on Hebron, he went with a train of two hundred of the best citizens of Jerusalem to Hebron. Ahitophel, who had been David's friend and best counsellor, was won over, and went with Absalom. Messengers were sent all over the country with the word that, at the sound of signal trumpets, Absalom was to be proclaimed king; and at last, at the feast in Hebron, the signal trumpets were sounded, and the air rang with shouts of, "God save king Absalom."

Word was soon brought to David of the rebellion, and that numbers from all the tribes were hastening to Hebron to do homage to Absalom. That his dearly loved son, and his people, even his own people of Judah, should seek his life, almost broke the king's heart; but in all his sorrow he thought of his beloved city, and, unwilling to risk its destruction, he left it at once. Followed by all his household, David set out, walking barefoot, as a sign of humiliation and mourning. Crowds of the citizens went with him; and his faithful six hundred followers, the Gibborim, as his old companions in the cave were called, marched as his escort. The whole population were moved to see a king who had made his people so illustrious—one who had been a hero from his youth—now, at sixty years of age, driven from his throne by his son. Zadok and Abiathar, the two high-

priests, had hurried from Jerusalem with the ark, but David, who soon regained his firm trust in God, sent them back with the ark to the tabernacle. The priests, too, could send him word of how matters went if they remained in the city. A little further on Hushai, an old friend and companion of David's, joined him, but he was sent back to Jerusalem to defeat, if possible, the counsel of Ahitophel.

So, slowly and sadly, David and his company went on to the open plain at the fords of Jordan, where they waited to hear from Hushai.

Absalom entered Jerusalem in triumph very soon after David had left it. Ahitophel rode by his side, ready with wise counsel; and among the first to greet the new king was Hushai—even Absalom was shocked at his supposed treachery. A council was held at the palace, and Ahitophel urged Absalom to let him lead twelve thousand men at once against David, who, weak and disheartened, would be easily conquered; the people with him would run away, and only the king's blood need be shed. All approved of this—all but Hushai. He said that David and his Gibborim were fierce as a bear robbed of her cubs, and that the king was too good a warrior to be surprised. He advised Absalom to call out all Israel from Dan to Beersheba, and that he (Absalom) should head them in person. Absalom thought Hushai's counsel the best, and agreed to it, and two sons of the priests, quick runners, were at once sent to carry the good news to David. For, if Absalom took time to raise an army, David could raise one too!

Before night David and his people had crossed the Jordan, where the Eastern tribes rallied round him. Absalom lost his real counsellor; for Ahitophel, angry at Hushai's advice being taken, and sure that the rebellion would not succeed, went to his house at Gilo and hanged himself.

Three months went by; David was at Mahanaim, where Saul's son, Ishbosheth, had reigned for seven years. It was during this time of waiting that David wrote the forty-first, fifty-fifth, sixty-fifth, and one hundred and ninth psalms, referring to Ahitophel, his "own familiar friend, whom he had trusted, and who ate of his bread," but had now "lifted up his heel" against him; and to this time are attributed the third, fourth, and twenty-third psalms.

At last the battle that was to crush the rebellion was fought in the Wood of Ephraim. "The Light of Israel," as David was fondly called by his people, could not be risked in the battle, and he waited within the city walls with a reserve corps, to succor the rest if necessary. As the troops marched to battle,

one command was repeated again and again—"Absalom was to be spared and treated gently if he should fall into their hands."

Absalom's army was much the larger of the two, and the hand-to-hand struggle was very bloody. But the victory was with the king. Twenty thousand of the prince's forces lay dead, and the rest fled in panic. The pursuit through the thickets and marshes of the woods was terrible for the fugitives. Absalom himself, hurrying through the tangled paths of the forest, was caught by his long hair in a branch of a great oak tree and held fast, while his mule went on, leaving him hanging in the air. Joab, hearing of his plight, hastened to the spot, and caring nothing for David's command—for he knew it was a weak and foolish one—he thrust three javelins in the prince and killed him. A trumpet-call to stop pursuing the fugitives then sounded; Absalom's dead body was flung into a hole in the ground, and every one passing flung stones on it as a sign of bitter anger at so undutiful a son. Absalom had raised a pillar in his own honor in the "King's Vale," about a quarter of a mile from Jerusalem; but his wickedness left him a grave marked only by the heap of stones, to which passers-by added for a long time afterward.

The news of the death of his son made David for a time forget all else; but, roused at last by Joab's remonstrances, he took his seat in the gate and rewarded his soldiers by words of praise.

David, the hearts of the nation once more his, returned to Jerusalem, where he busied himself in making every preparation that he could for the great temple which Solomon, his young son, was to build. Before his death, to make sure of Solomon's succession, that prince was solemnly anointed and proclaimed king, and even a second time, when the tribes had sent their elders and chiefs to Jerusalem, Solomon was again anointed, and warned that all his glory and safety depended on his living a godly life. At last, at seventy years of age, having reigned nearly forty years, David died, and was buried in the "City of David." Only the kings were allowed burial within the city walls; and probably beneath the heap of ruins that bury the ancient Jerusalem the ashes of David still rest in their rock-hewn sepulchre.

THE COURAGEOUS QUEEN.

BOOK OF ESTHER.

One of the favorite books of the Bible is the Book of Esther. Its heroine was an orphan Jewess, who had been adopted by her childless uncle, Mordecai. She was a very beautiful girl, and probably not particularly Jewish-looking, as the king did not know she belonged to that people till some years after he had chosen her for his queen. Ahasuerus is thought to have been the Persian king Xerxes. The kings in his time had given up residing at Babylon, except in the very coldest seasons, and spent most of the year at Susa or Shushan. Here a beautiful palace had been built; and in this palace, at a great feast which Ahasuerus gave to his nobles, the queen, Vashti, was commanded to unveil her face, that all might see her beauty. It seems a little thing to us for the king to ask; but in Vashti's eyes it was a most insulting command, lowering her as we should feel lowered if we were commanded to appear in public without any outer dress on. The queen, very properly, refused, and the anxiety of the king and counsellors that other women should not learn from Vashti to refuse obedience to their husbands is quite amusing. "For if this deed," they said, "shall come abroad, we'll all be having trouble with our wives! we must request you to rule the queen, that we may rule our lesser queens!" So poor Vashti was dismissed, very thankful, no doubt, that her head was spared.

It was then proposed to get together all the beautiful girls that could be found, so that the king might choose a queen. Esther, by her quiet, modest ways, won the friendship of Hegai, the chamberlain in charge of these young girls, and, indeed, the good-will of all in the palace, so there was general rejoicing when the king chose her as his queen. Mordecai had forbidden her to mention her kindred or people; and, though her uncle was employed in the palace, the people did not know that the beautiful young queen was his niece.

Going in and out of the palace, summoned to the king's councils, honored

as his friend, was a man named Haman. Every one bowed down before him—every one tried to win his favor—for he had many opportunities to advance their interests. But there was just one man that did not flatter him or fawn upon him; one man who refused to bow down before him. Mordecai, the Jew, showed by his manner that he saw through this Haman, whom all were honoring. The more firmly Mordecai refused to honor Haman, the more important did the matter become in the eyes of the king's favorite.

Mordecai discovered a plot to assassinate the king, and, giving timely warning of it, the king's life was saved. How Haman trembled lest notice should be taken of the Jew's loyalty! But the days went by, and the only notice taken of Mordecai's service was a register of what he had done in the chronicles of the realm. Haman grew more and more prosperous, and more and more angry at the one man who refused to do him honor. He hated Mordecai so that he at last resolved to kill, not him alone, but all the Jews throughout the kingdom. These Jews were comparatively little known to Ahasuerus; so, when Haman described them as "a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them," and offered to pay two million dollars himself to hire soldiers to destroy them, the king thought Haman a very loyal subject, and even gave him the royal signet ring to sign a decree for the wholesale massacre of the Jews throughout the kingdom. Haman, who was superstitious, like all heathen, had cast lots to see what month would be propitious for this massacre, and the lot fell on the next to the last month of the year; so there were seven months in which some way of escape might be found.

Great was the dismay among the Jews on hearing of the decree, which was published at once in Shushan, while "posts"—men on horses over the plains, on mules in the hilly countries, and on camels or dromedaries on the hot, arid uplands—carried the decree to the farthest part of the realm. Mordecai no longer sat in the king's gate; for he laid aside his court-dress, and, clad in sackcloth, cried out to God. Esther, hearing that her uncle sat in sackcloth, sent presents of clothing to him, begging him to be cheerful, for at first the young queen did not know of the decree; but Mordecai sent a copy of it to his niece, charging her that she should go in unto the king and intercede in behalf of her people.

ESTHER CONFOUNDING HAMAN.

Esther, queen as she is, does not question that she should still obey the good, kind man who has been as a father to her; but she thinks Mordecai cannot realize what a risk she will run, and how little she actually sees of the king. "All the king's servants," she sends word to Mordecai, "and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days."

But Mordecai cannot see his whole nation perish without risking something to save them; even his darling Esther had better die than not try to save her people; and he sends this message to Esther: "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Upon this the queen, sending a request that all her people in Shushan may fast for her, declares: "I also and my maidens will fast likewise: and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

It is not an easy thing to face death. Life, no doubt, was very sweet to beautiful Esther; but, strengthened by prayer, on the third day she put on her royal apparel and went into the king's presence unbidden. Her fasting and prayer had made her face even lovelier than before. Her eyes, filled with holy resolves, looked more wondrously beautiful than on the day when the king first loved her; and so the golden sceptre is held out, and Esther is safe. With wonderful tact she invites the king and his friend Haman to a banquet, where the king again asks what favor she desires, assuring her that he will grant it, even to the half of his kingdom; but she begs that he will come again with Haman to a banquet which she will prepare on the next day, when she will make known her request.

That night the king could not sleep, and ordered the record or book of chronicles to be brought and read to him. By God's providence they read of Mordecai's discovery of the plot against the king's life. Ahasuerus asked what

honor or reward had been given to Mordecai. To his surprise he found nothing had been done. Early the next morning, as he was planning what he could do for this loyal servant, he heard Haman was in the outer court (who had come to ask permission to hang Mordecai!), and sent for him, asking him abruptly what he thought should be done for a man whom the king delighted to honor. Haman, quite sure he was the man, said: "Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

Oh, how he could have bitten his own tongue out when Ahasuerus bade him do all that for *Mordecai!* He dared not refuse; and, after swallowing the bitter pill of honoring Mordecai, who had refused to honor him, he had to hurry to the queen's banquet. There, before his face, Esther told the king of his horrible cruelty; and that the Jews, whom Haman wished to kill, were her people. In vain the wretched man begged for pity; his face was covered—as to this day in Persia they cover the face of one who is to be executed—and he was hanged on the very gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. But, as we know, Persian decrees were unchangeable; so all that Ahasuerus could do for his queen's people was to send by his swiftest posts another decree that the Jews, on that thirteenth day of Adar, might "stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power that would assault them." Mordecai, too, was raised to great power, and issued a decree that all Jews should keep the feast of Purim on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar in commemoration of this great deliverance.

PASSING THROUGH FIRE.

DANIEL III.

It was not, after all, the king of Assyria who conquered the people of Judah. For one hundred years, through the reigns of bad kings like Manasseh, and good ones like Josiah, God saved them from their enemies; but at last, as they would not hearken to the prophets, he allowed Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to conquer them. Twice this king besieged Jerusalem. The first time he carried back with him some of the nobles and princes as hostages; some years after, all but the shepherds and farmers were taken captives. These first hostages were probably well treated, and the young princes were placed in one of the royal palaces and carefully educated in all the learning of the Babylonians. Four of these boys were earnest, religious Jews, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who resolved to serve God in the heathen palace. One of the first temptations that they had to meet was a hard one for boys. They felt it their duty to refuse the dainties and pleasant food offered them. For a Jew, meat which had been killed by any but the Levites was "unclean," and he was also forbidden to eat many kinds of food—such as pork or hares, or meat cooked in butter. So, good as the meals were, these four boys felt they must not eat them; and, to make as little trouble as possible, they ate only pulse—a kind of vegetable—and drank only water. But the steward, who was put in charge of the boys, was afraid he would be blamed if they looked poor and neglected, and so he told Daniel that he dared not let them refuse the king's meat. Daniel asked him to test them ten days, and then, if they did not improve on the plain fare, they would eat the food provided. "And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat."

What sort of a place was this Babylon, in which these boys were trying to serve God? How did it look in their eyes, used as they were to Jerusalem,

THE FIERY FURNACE.

the city set on a hill, with its narrow streets and deep valleys? As they came within sight of the city, which was built on the banks of the Euphrates, with a great flat plain all about it, except on the south, where an arm of the Persian Gulf spread out like a small sea, the boys thought they saw great high hills, but, to their astonishment, they were told those were the city walls. These walls, from forty to sixty miles in circumference, were three hundred feet high, with a carriage-road on the top eighty feet wide. They were built of sun-dried bricks, and probably covered with paintings which recorded the triumphs of Chaldea. Great moats, like rivers, surrounded the walls. The boys saw the tower described in the chapter headed "Nimrod and Abraham." Perhaps they stood on its topmost story and looked down on the beautiful city, with forests and parks laid out in it, with its many-colored buildings, which were three and four stories high, and painted so brightly that they looked as if made of porcelain, with bright flowers everywhere; and, over the plain outside the walls, a great sea of cultivated fields. Perhaps they were conducted at once to the palace of the kings, which was itself a city within the city, being seven miles round. They wandered through its gardens, which, they were told, had been laid out to please a foreign princess whom the king had married, who longed to see hills instead of the flat country: so these gardens rose one above another to a height of more than seventy feet, and on these hills great forest-trees grew side by side with tender flowering shrubs. The boys wondered, no doubt, that they could have thought their sacred temple so vast, and saw how little reason they had to boast of the palaces of their kings, which had seemed so magnificent before. The brilliant costumes of the numberless court officers—the satraps, captains, chief judges, treasurers, councillors, and rulers of the different provinces—dazzled the young Jews as they saw them dashing through the wide streets in golden chariots drawn by magnificent horses. Delightful music on many instruments that they had never seen before was heard in the streets and palaces.

It was no easy thing to keep simple and pure in the midst of all this. It was only by daily prayer—a habit of prayer—that these youths kept faithful to the God of their fathers, in the midst of an idolatrous court. The king, testing them in various ways, found them "ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm." This shows that they studied faithfully, as well as prayed earnestly. We will follow first the three young men whose heathen

names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and reserve Daniel's story for another time. It was Daniel, though, that advanced his companions, for it was at his request that they were given positions of trust. But their very advancement was dangerous to them.

Nebuchadnezzar, who had conquered the great Assyrian kingdom, as well as Phœnicia and smaller kingdoms, determined that he would bind together all these different peoples in the worship of one god; then, too, he felt that the god Bel, or Belus, should be honored by all the world. So he had an enormous image erected on the great plain of Dura. The image was covered with gold, and could be seen from a long distance. All the rulers of every province, from near and far, were ordered to attend at the dedication of this image, and when the instruments sounded all were to bow and adore. Warning was given that if any did *not* bow down and worship the image they should be cast into the furnace. Herodotus tells us that a few centuries before the Christian era there was at Babylon an idol image made of gold, eighteen feet high, and that every stranger was obliged to worship it before he entered the city.

We do not know where Daniel was at this time. It may be that Nebuchadnezzar purposely kept him in some other part of the kingdom to save him. But his three friends, as "rulers of the province," had to attend the meeting. Were they troubled and anxious? It may be that very morning they strengthened each other with the word they had heard from the prophet: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." At any rate, when Nebuchadnezzar, astonished at their daring, remonstrated with them, and warned them of the penalty which must follow disobedience, they answered calmly: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

In a fury at their calmness, the king commanded the furnace to be heated seven times as hot as usual; and so fierce were its fires that the mighty men who thrust the three Jews into it were burned to death in obeying the king. Gazing, no doubt, from a safe distance, the king himself looks to see the fire consume the daring adventurers. He starts back in amazement. Eagerly his

courtiers press about him. "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" he asks, with blanched face and trembling lips.

"True, O King," answer the counsellors.

"Lo," says the king, in a hushed, awed voice, "I see *four* men *loose*, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like one of the sons of the gods." Then, going as near as he dared to the furnace, the king himself called loudly, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, come forth of the midst of the fire."

It may be no one else saw the angel walking with the three men, but all saw that they were unhurt; that there was not so much as the smell of fire about them. Nebuchadnezzar broke forth at once in praise of the God who delivereth his servants that trust in him and announced a decree, "That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort."

We know nothing more of the three faithful Jews; they have long ago gone to their reward; but, surely, one of the joys of heaven will be to hear the story from their own lips, as those may who, like them, are faithful through all temptation.

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE.

DANIEL V.

You have read something of the wonders of Babylon, and when I tell you that almost all of the great walls and palaces were built by Nebuchadnezzar, and that, besides all this, he built about one hundred smaller towns, you will not be surprised to hear that he was proud of what he had accomplished. We know Nebuchadnezzar did do all this, because they used to stamp the name of the royal builder on every brick; and we find his name on all these buildings. But he was warned that his pride was wrong, and that he was only able to do these deeds by God's help. The way this warning came was through a dream. As you know, the people in those days valued their dreams and tried to interpret them. Daniel, like Joseph at the court of Pharaoh, was not only able to interpret a dream for Nebuchadnezzar, but told the vision itself, which the king could not recall. From that time Daniel held high positions at the court. Some years after the king had another remarkable dream. At first the regular seers and magicians of the court were called; but they failed to satisfy the king, and Daniel was sent for. When he heard the dream, for an hour he stood lost in wonder, and showed so plainly that he dreaded telling the king—whom he truly loved—the interpretation, that Nebuchadnezzar told him to have no fear, but to speak out. So Daniel told the king that his dream meant that for seven years he—the great king of Babylon—would be driven out from among men, and would eat grass with the beasts "till thou knowest that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men." Then Daniel begged the king to break off from sin and oppression, and to show mercy to the poor, "if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

But the king did not heed the warning. About a year after that, as he walked in his palace, he said aloud, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and the honor of my majesty?"

"While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; Thy kingdom is departed from thee: and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will," and that same day the king was afflicted with a strange madness, and for seven years wandered about, eating the grass, fancying he was an ox. No doubt, at times, he was less wild, but for seven years his son Evil-Merodach reigned in his place. At the end of that time, Nebuchadnezzar lifted up his eyes to heaven, and, as he himself tells us, "Mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me: and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those who walk in pride he is able to abase."

Now, as each king was apt to raise his own friends to the offices of trust, we hear no more of Daniel's being consulted at court after the death of Nebuchadnezzar till the reign of his grandson Belshazzar. It is believed that Nabonadius was king, but that on the Persians declaring war with him he left the city of Babylon in charge of his brother Belshazzar, and led his army out to battle on the plains, where he was defeated and slain, after which the city of Babylon was besieged. The people of the city felt very secure, for there were large tracts within it which they could cultivate, and immense stores of provisions were laid up; enough, it is said, for twenty years. They considered their immense wall impregnable, as indeed it was. It is true the river Euphrates flowed through the city; but heavy gates closed down at each end on the water, so that nothing but the river could pass under. There were other gates all along the river's banks, but these the citizens, in their security, often left open.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.

In spite of the siege, feasting and revelry went on, and one night Belshazzar gave a particularly superb feast to the lords and ladies of the court. The mightiest nobles and the fairest women were assembled in the banqueting-hall. They drank and feasted, pouring out wine to the gods. Suddenly Belshazzar thinks of a new way of honoring his guests. "Bring," he cries, "the golden vessels that the great king brought from Jerusalem; the Hebrews call them sacred. We will consecrate them now by using them." And they drink, with many a jest, from the golden cups. But look! the king's face grows white; he lifts his arm and points far up on the wall opposite his throne. Oh! awful mystery! a shadowy hand is writing, in flaming characters, far above their heads! They look on in awed silence till the writing is finished, and the hand disappears. Then the king rouses himself, and promises rich rewards to any who can interpret the meaning of the strange characters. One and another try, but all are unnerved and bewildered. The queen-mother, hearing of the strange occurrence, comes to her son and tells him that Daniel, who was his grandfather's interpreter, can surely solve the mystery. So Daniel is summoned, and stands before the king, who tells him of the promised rewards. The old man answers with quiet dignity: "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation."

The prophet then recalls God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar, and reminds Belshazzar how little he has heeded the lesson of his grandfather's insanity. "Thou hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, and thy wives have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." Then he reads the Hebrew characters, and interprets them. *Mene, mene*, tells that the kingdom is *numbered* and *ended; Tekel*, it is *weighed* and found *light; Peres*, it is divided and given to the Persians (Pharsin).

And now, while they sit in fear and trembling, let us see what is going on in the Persian camp. Cyrus, the Persian general, has noticed that there is a great dam at the northern end of the city, and, on inquiry, finds that a vast basin has been formed outside the walls to receive the overflow caused by the spring freshets. This overflow was so great that it made a lake of fifty miles in

extent. He waits till the night of Belshazzar's feast. The great gates which spanned the river being securely closed, the Babylonians have left open the gates on the river banks. An army of workmen are sent by Cyrus to the dam, and, breaking it down, the river rushes through and fills the immense basin, running so low that the Persian soldiers can creep under the gates and walk along its bed, the water only reaching to their knees. They enter the city, killing all who oppose them. "Meet at the palace" was the order given, and hardly had the prophet's words died on the air before the enemy appears. "The Persians! the Persians!" passes from lip to lip. The king, sword in hand, faces the enemy; but all is in vain, his doom has been pronounced, and "that same night was Belshazzar king of the Chaldeans slain."

"Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom passed away;
He, in the balance weighed,
Is light and worthless clay.
The shroud his robe of state,
His canopy the stone:
The Mede is at his gate!
The Persian on his throne!"

JESUS! NAME OF WONDROUS LOVE.

MATTHEW I. 21.

FAR up in Galilee, one hundred miles from the holy city, lived a young girl named Mary, who was betrothed to a man named Joseph; that is, they had promised to marry each other before long. They were both humble people, but God-fearing and truly religious. Mary, we are told by an old tradition, "spoke little, and only what was to the purpose. She was very gentle, and showed respect and honor to all. She was of middle height, some say rather above it; she spoke to all with a prudent frankness, soberly, without confusion, and always pleasantly; she had a fair complexion, blond hair, and bright hazel eyes; her eyebrows were arched and dark; her lips ruddy and full of kindness when she spoke; she had no pride, but was simple, and free from deceit." Joseph, we know, from his kindness to his betrothed, was a true, upright man. God told him that she whom he was to marry would soon give birth to a child, and that that child was the Son of God. So, keeping the wonderful secret to himself, he took her, as his wife, to Bethlehem, where he was obliged to go to be taxed. Perhaps Mary did not want to be left without the kind friend who alone knew what the angel had told her. Probably Mary rode on an ass—the animal so much thought of in Judea—and Joseph walked by her side. Passing down the little valley of Nazareth, they crossed the rich plain of Esdraelon, which was covered with cities and villages, with orchards, vineyards, gardens, and fields. They passed the mountains of Gilboa, talking, perhaps, of Saul and of their mighty ancestor David, the second King of Israel. Dothan, where Joseph met his brethren, would come in sight on their right, and then the city of Samaria, just rebuilt by Herod, and named by him Sebaste, crowded with heathen temples. They probably rested at Sychar on the second day, not going into the town, for the Jews never mixed with the Samaritans, but resting at Jacob's Well, eating the food they had brought with them; then passing as quickly as possible through Samaria, they entered Judea—bleaker

THE NATIVITY.

and barer, but far more dear to all loyal Jews. Shiloh was passed; then Gilgal—the scene of the first passover in the Promised Land—and, at last, their feet would stand within the gates of Jerusalem; but they did not linger long there, for six miles beyond was Bethlehem, where they were to be taxed. This little village covered the upper slope and part of the top of a narrow hill. There were no inns at all at that time. "Kahns," a sort of rude shelter for travellers, were erected in barren and unfrequented spots; but in every village any passing wayfarer was sure to be made some one's guest, for the rabbis taught the people that hospitality to strangers would be rewarded by an entrance into Paradise. So we may be sure that it was not at an inn that Joseph and Mary found shelter. The same word that is translated *inn* (Luke ii. 7), in the only other places it is used refers to a guest-chamber in a friendly house. But, as strangers were pouring into Bethlehem for the taxation, the guest-chamber of their friend's house was full, and the only empty space was the place, half kitchen, half stable—just a natural cave in the hillside—against which the house had been built.

We are not told how long they stayed in Bethlehem; Eastern people are never in a hurry. At any rate, here in the hollow of the hills Mary was given the God-sent child; he who was to "save his people from their sins." She laid her little one in a manger, but we must not think this was not a comfortable resting-place for the child. Dr. Thompson writes: "The mangers are built of small stones and mortar, in the shape of a kneading-trough; and, when cleaned up and whitewashed, as they often are in summer, they do very well to lay little babies in; and though this was in the month of December, it was not cold or bleak as with us."

On the very night when the child was born "there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger. . . . . And the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

For forty days Mary stayed at Bethlehem, never appearing outside the cave; for, as a Jewess, her first visit was to be made to the synagogue or the temple. At last, riding on an ass, probably, as Jewish mothers did who were going to the temple to offer thanks, she offered two doves, and gave thanks to God for the gift of a child. Think for a moment what her thanks must have been! "The Son of the Highest," the angel had told her he should be called. And, probably, as she bowed herself in prayer, she whispered softly, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." But another ceremony had still to be performed. Jesus, as the first-born son, was to be "redeemed" by the payment of a certain amount of money into the hands of the priest, and prayers were then offered up for the child.

How soon after this came the visit of the Magi, and the hasty flight into Egypt, we cannot tell; certainly the family were back in Nazareth before the child was three years old. Nazareth lies among the hills and overlooks one of the little corners of the plain of Esdraelon. In March, a traveller climbing up the steep road that leads to the village, would be charmed by the bright green of the plains and the beauty of the flowers; the red anemone and the pink phlox are the commonest; rock-roses, white and yellow, are plentiful, with a few pink ones. There is the pink convolvulus, marigold, wild geranium, and mignonette, with salvia and pimpernel. The village itself may have altered, but we can be quite sure that the same birds visited it then as now: larks, sparrows, nightingales, black-caps, wrens, swallows, and robin-redbreasts were as familiar to Him as to many boys nowadays. Great butterflies flitted on the hillsides, and flocks of sheep and goats dotted the plain below.

Stand in fancy where the boy Jesus must many times have stood—at the top of the hill behind the village. Galilee spreads out like a map at one's feet, Mount Tabor rises near at hand, and beyond it is Little Hermon. Turn to the west, and Carmel, "Elijah's Mountain" to every boy, is only twenty miles off. Looking from northwest to north, the cottages of Cana of Galilee can be seen, where Jesus was to first use his miraculous power. Mountains rise above mountains to the north, till, more than sixty miles off, Hermon stands ten thousand feet above the sea.

Here, in their mountain home, lived Mary and Joseph, with Jesus and the brothers and sisters who were given later. The white, flat-roofed houses in Naza-

reth to-day are doubtless much the same as those among which He played as a child. Vines shaded the walls, doves sunned themselves on the roofs. Inside the house, a few mats on the floor, a built seat, running along the wall, spread with cushions and the bright quilts on which the inmates sleep at night; a painted chest in the corner; some large clay water-jars, their mouths filled, perhaps, with sweet herbs to keep the water cool and fresh; a low, round, painted wooden stool, brought at meals into the middle of the room to hold the tray and dish, round which the household sat, with crossed knees, on mats; this was all the furniture in such a home as Mary's.

Joseph worked at his trade of carpentering, but the many festivals of the Church, which made labor unlawful for full two months of the year, gave him time to instruct the children in the sacred history of his nation. A Jewish boy began at five years of age to commit the books of Moses to memory; and, indeed, as soon as a child could speak it learned the morning prayers. At six years old a Jewish boy was sent to school. The children sat on benches or on the ground, according to their ages, the master sitting on a raised seat. The younger children had some simple part of the Bible carefully written out, which they repeated till it was learned by heart.

There are many foolish legends as to the wonders of Christ's childhood, but not one has the stamp of truth. He was a simple child—the one perfect boy—a loving, obedient son. Take the sweetest little one you know, and as that little one is when all goes well, so was the little Jesus at all times. As the best boy is when things are all right and pleasant for him, so was Jesus every day. Day by day he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

THE FIRST VISIT TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.

LUKE II. 41–52.

When Jesus was twelve years old he went up to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover, with Joseph and Mary. This feast began about the 15th of April, and lasted seven days. The multitudes flocking to the city must have been almost countless; over two million people worshipped at the temple at the great feast. Every house was crowded and the whole landscape covered with tents or booths of mat and wicker-work. Jerusalem itself was built upon hills. The road from Nazareth entered the new lower town by the Damascus gate, and passed through the business street in the bottom of the Valley of the Cheesemakers, which was a deep, narrow hollow between Mount Zion and Moriah, crowded with houses. The clothes bazaar, braziers' shops, the bazaar of the butchers, and one for the wool-dealers, were in this part of the town; and here, too, was the square where notice was given of the new moon and feasts of each month. The old, or upper city, was on the top of Mount Zion; here were the goldsmiths' shops, and the houses of the priests that lived at Jerusalem; along its north side was a wall over fifty feet high, and outside this wall, towering one hundred and twenty feet above it, stood three castles, which Herod the Great had built, all of white marble. Close at hand was the palace of Herod, shining within with gold and silver, and many of the walls and ceilings crusted with precious stones. The handsomer dwelling-houses were in this upper city.

On Mount Moriah rose the wonderful temple. The foundation on which this was built was as remarkable as the building itself. The hill was steep, and the top not large enough for the great courts; so a solid wall of masonry, six hundred feet long and almost as high as the tallest church spire, was built up from the valley below. On the top of this immense wall was

the royal porch, a building longer and higher than one of the great English cathedrals.

Most of us think of the temple as a very large building, but this is a mistake; the temple itself was not nearly so large as many modern churches; but it was surrounded by courts, each one larger and more beautiful than the other. Let us suppose, then, that we are visiting the temple as it stood in the time of Christ. You remember Solomon's temple had been destroyed long before; then, about five hundred years before Christ, the Temple of the Exile, as it was called, was built, and Herod the Great, eighteen years before the time of Christ, had set about the restoration of the temple, employing constantly eighteen thousand men upon it; but it was not entirely finished till A.D. 65, just five years before its total destruction by the army of Titus!

Still, when Jesus, as a boy of twelve, went up to the temple to keep the feast, the walls were complete and the Sanctuary itself stood in all its wondrous beauty—made of great blocks of white marble, and all its front overlaid with pure gold—on the top of Mount Moriah. The whole temple-grounds were six hundred feet wide on every side. A great high wall, built up from the solid rock, of immense stones, enclosed this space. The front faced the east, but in this outer wall there were four gateways in the back, or on the west, and only one in each of the other sides. Come in at the Royal Gate on the east side; these gates were all marvels of strength and workmanship, from sixty to eighty feet high. Look now at these double rows of great marble columns, each of one solid piece, thirty-seven and one-half feet high, and so large round that three men, with arms extended, could just clasp hands around them. This is Solomon's porch. Look far up above your head; see the solid roof of polished cedar, so strongly built that soldiers can march about on it and look down at the crowds entering at the different gateways. Before going further on let us turn to the left, where is a still wider porch; this, with four rows of those immense columns, is the royal porch, already referred to; you can walk all along it, and on the west and north sides you will still find two rows of the wonderful columns, till you stand again in Solomon's porch. On every side a low stone wall, four and one-half feet high, shuts you out from polluting the Court of Israel, and those small obelisks or pillars that are set in the wall, at equal distances, warn us in Latin and Greek that no Gentile can pass within, under pain of

JESUS QUESTIONING THE DOCTORS.

death. The Jewish boy, passing beyond this fence, on the eastern side, goes up a flight of fifteen steps, where is a high wall again, with beautiful gates opening into the Court of the Women. This court is the usual place of worship for all, but women cannot pass beyond it. Here is the Gate Beautiful spoken of in Acts iii. 2. It was made of Corinthian brass, was sixty feet high, and, when closed each night, twenty men were needed for the work. Here, in the Court of the Women, was another porch, with one single row of columns, each pillar of the size and beauty of those in the Court of the Gentiles. Crossing the court, you go up fifteen steps again to the gate leading into the Court of Israel. Entering, a little further on, you mount twelve more steps, and there stands the great brazen altar, seventy-five feet square and twenty-two and one-half feet high, with steps leading up it on the south side. Beyond the altar is the temple; its vestibule, which is never closed, for it has no doors, is seventy-five feet long, thirty feet wide, and one hundred and thirty-five feet high. It is all plated with gold, with vines and grapes of solid gold clustering up over the entrance. At the end of the vestibule hangs the first veil, and behind that are doors, leading into the Sanctuary or Holy Place, where stands the candlestick, table of shewbread, and altar of incense. This Sanctuary is sixty feet long, thirty feet wide, and ninety feet high. At the further end hangs the second veil, which hides the Holy of Holies—perfectly empty now. The lost ark was never replaced. On each side of the Holy Place are rooms used by the high-priest. It is one of these rooms that is represented in the picture.

At twelve years of age a Jew was treated as a man, so that Jesus, at the time of his first visit to Jerusalem, was free to go and come, not watched as a child, and we may be sure he was often at the temple through all the passover-week. The passover itself was eaten in the different houses; not fewer than ten and as many as twenty were allowed to eat the feast together. Women were not required to eat the passover, but were allowed to do so if they chose. Everything was done in haste, as the lambs had to be killed, roasted, and eaten between three in the afternoon and twelve at night. At midnight the temple gates were opened, and the people, most of whom stayed up all night, thronged the courts in holiday dress, carrying their thank-offering of meat. The priests took a certain share of this and then returned the rest to the givers, who had it cooked for them in the Court of the Women and ate it as a second feast in one of the

temple porches. The 15th was one of the six work-days in the year on which no work could be done, and was taken up with free-will offerings at the temple. On the 16th the first fruits from the Kidem valley were brought to the temple and waved before the Lord. Jesus no doubt saw this ceremony, and noticed, as he left the temple, how quickly the streets were filled with men selling new barley bread, parched ears of the new corn, and early fruits of all kinds. From the 17th to the 20th were only half holidays, and many left the city. The last day, the 21st, was kept as a sabbath, and there was a rehearsal of the passover supper for those who had not been able to reach Jerusalem on the first great day. The passover finished, all prepared to return home, and all was confusion and uproar. The start was always made in the night, by torchlight, so as to avoid the heat of the day. There was real danger in the narrow places that women or children might be trampled on by the animals. Parents were often heard calling for lost children; friends shouted to each other; the drivers beat and scolded the poor animals. But as the roads branched off things grew pleasanter, and by the time the first day's march was ended all was in order. It was at this time that his parents first became alarmed as to Jesus, and returned at once to Jerusalem; but, as they could not reach it until the evening of the second day, nothing could be done till the day after, when—knowing, no doubt, his love for the temple—they found him in one of the schools of the rabbis, held in the temple courts. These schools were open to all, and any one could answer or propose a question. The rabbi sat on a high seat, with his scholars in a half circle at his feet. The one study was the Law (that is, the Books of Moses), and what certain rabbis had written or said of it. Here his parents find him, looking, it may be, like David when summoned before Samuel, "ruddy and of fair countenance," his large eyes bright with thoughts of his Father. Mary takes her boy one side, and says: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee, sorrowing." The answer must have fallen on Mary's heart as a soft rebuke. "How is it that ye sought me? There was no place where I could so surely be as in my Father's house—there were no matters which could so rightfully fill my thoughts as his." Her son was outgrowing his childhood; the light of a higher world was breaking in on his soul. Yet his "hour had not yet come;" "and he went down to Nazareth, and was subject unto them."

THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.

ACTS X. 38.

FROM the time of His return to Nazareth, after the visit to Jerusalem, till he was about thirty years of age, we know nothing of the Saviour's life but that he worked at Joseph's trade, supporting, it is believed, his widowed mother. He began his work in the world by going to John the Baptist and receiving baptism at his hands. John refused this at first, for he felt unworthy to baptize his Lord; but at Christ's command he obeyed: and while Jesus was being baptized the Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove. Forty days of trial and temptation in the wilderness followed, and then Jesus came forth and stood before men as a rabbi or teacher. The rabbis each had their chosen disciples, who, if they did not live with them, were always in their company when journeying or teaching. So Jesus chose disciples; twelve men, most of them unlearned, plain, and poor. The first two, Andrew and John, had been with John the Baptist; but followed Jesus when their master pointed him out as the Lamb of God. He, hearing their footsteps, turned and invited them to join him. Andrew then found his brother Simon Peter, and John his brother James, and brought them to the Saviour; so when Jesus returned once more to Cana of Galilee, where his mother was, he had four disciples, and a fifth, Philip, joined them before they reached Cana.

Some intimate friend or relation of Mary's was to be married in Cana, and Jesus, with his disciples, was invited to the feast. A marriage in the East is a great event, the festivities usually lasting some days. A Jewish maiden was always married on a Wednesday, so we know the day on which this feast began. The bride, whose dress and ornaments, with perfumes, ointment, and fruit, were sent by the bridegroom in the early part of the wedding-day, was thickly veiled from head to foot; with a wreath of myrtle-leaves, either natural or of gold, on her head. She waited at her mother's house for her bridegroom, to whom, on that

JESUS HEALING THE SICK.

day, she had sent his shroud, which he wore on each New-Year's-Day and Day of Atonement during his life. The bridegroom came in the evening, with flute-players and singers, groomsmen and friends, while the girl-friends of the bride joined the procession, dancing and singing the bride's praises. All then went together to the house of the bridegroom's father, where the bride sat veiled among the women, and the bridegroom, crowned and decked with ornaments, sat among his friends. Singing, music, dancing, guessing of riddles, and merry jokes amused the guests night after night. The wine used was light, and none drank to excess, for the people were warned against drunkenness. Here is one of the parables by which the rabbis taught the danger that lurked in the vine: "When Noah planted his vineyard, Satan came and asked him what he was doing. 'Planting a vineyard,' was the reply. 'What is it for?' 'Its fruits, green or dry, are sweet and pleasant: we make wine of it, which gladdens the heart.' 'I should like to have a hand in the planting,' said Satan. 'Good,' replied Noah. Satan then brought a lamb, a lion, a sow, and an ape, killed them in the vineyard, and let their blood run into the roots of the vines. From this it comes that a man, before he has taken wine, is simple as a lamb, which knows nothing, and is dumb before its shearers; when he has drunk moderately he grows a lion, and thinks there is not his like; if he drinks still more, he turns a swine, and wallows in the mire; if he drinks still more, he becomes a filthy ape, falling hither and thither, and knowing nothing of what he does."

The feast to which Jesus was invited had lasted some time, when, to the great distress of those in charge, the wine gave out. Mary, who, like every true-hearted woman, liked to help her friends, hoped Jesus might know some way out of the difficulty. She had noticed the change in her son since His visit beyond Jordan; she felt that He had power—would not this be an excellent opportunity to exercise it? So she went to Him and said, "They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." Do not think that Jesus answered her rudely. The term "woman" was then, as it always should be, a term of honor and dignity. That Mary understood the Saviour's words is shown in her telling the servants, "whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." A little later, before the wine had become quite exhausted, Jesus told the servants to fill the large waterpots which stood by with water, and then pour out and give to the ruler of the feast. The ruler, as he tasted the fresh

supply, was relieved from all anxiety, and went at once to the bridegroom to tell him that this last wine was the best of all.

This "beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed in him." From that day He went about doing good. Often such scenes occurred as the one given in the picture; mothers brought their sick children; the lame hobbled to him; the blind crept near, or cried aloud as they heard his passing footsteps.

One of the most loathsome diseases of the East is that of leprosy. A leper was believed, in the time of Christ, to be under God's curse. No leper was allowed to live in a walled town, and they were obliged to go with uncovered head, and to continually cry, "Unclean! unclean!" to warn others away. The disease began with little specks on the eyelids and on the palms of the hands; the hair became white and wiry; the skin was covered with shining scales, swellings, and sores; the nails fell off; the eyes, throat, and lungs were affected; and, at last, the sufferer died of consumption or dropsy. Never had a man "full of leprosy" been cured till Christ, with his touch, healed not one, but many. That Christ would touch one who was "unclean" was an awful offence to the strict Pharisees, who would not break the law, even to relieve from suffering.

All day long Christ was using his power, and we must not think it cost him nothing. "This kind," he said to his disciples, speaking of a devil whom he had cast out, "goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." He spent whole nights in prayer, and was often weary. The very sight of all the sin and suffering was a daily pain to him.

Would you like to hear how he looked? We have no likeness of the Saviour, for the Jews thought it was breaking the second commandment to paint any likeness of the human face, or make any statues. The Romish and Greek churches have several legends as to likenesses of Christ, but none of them are to be depended upon. They say, for instance, that the king of Edessa once sent a painter to Jesus to take his portrait, but the Saviour's face was so dazzling the artist could not paint it; then Jesus, willing to reward the king's devotion, impressed his likeness on a cloth, and sent that by the artist. Another legend is that the likeness of the Saviour was left upon the linen cloth in which he was wrapped at the burial. The following description of the Saviour is by one who has studied carefully the legends as to his appearance, and the dress of that period:

"Our eyes were resistlessly attracted to Him, for he was the centre of the group. He was not in soft clothing of byssus and silk, like the courtiers of Tiberias or Jerusalem, nor did he wear long, trailing robes like some of the Pharisees. On his head was a white keffiyeh—a square of linen doubled so that a corner fell down on each shoulder and on the back; a fillet or *agbul* round the head, keeping it in its place. On his body he wore a tunic, which reached to his wrists and to his feet, and over this a blue tallith, with the prescribed tassels of blue and white at the four corners, hung down so that the under-garment, which was gray striped with red, was little seen. His feet, shod with sandals—not shoes—were only visible now and then as he walked or moved. He was a man of middle size, with youthful beauty still in his face and form. The purity and charm of early manhood blended in his countenance with the ripeness of mature years. His complexion was fairer than that of those around him, for they had more of the bronze color of their nation. He seemed, indeed, even pale under the white sudar, for the ruddy glow of health, usual at his years, was wanting. The type of his features was hardly Jewish, but rather as if that and the Greek types blended into a perfect beauty, which, while it awakened reverence, filled the heart still more with love. His eyes looked on you with light which seemed broken and softened, as if by passing through tears. He stooped a little, and seemed as if communing with his own thoughts, and when he moved there was no affectation, as with some of the rabbis, but a natural dignity and grace, like one who feels himself a king though dressed in lowly robes."

THE PEOPLE OF SAMARIA.

JOHN IV.

LYING between Galilee on the north, and Judea on the south, you find on any map of Palestine a country marked Samaria. Now, you know very well that the Galileans were Jews, though rather rougher and more countrified than the people of Judea; but perhaps you cannot understand why the Samaritans were not Jews too? If you have read the earlier chapters in this book, you know that Sargon repeopled Samaria with heathen colonies. These heathen found the ruined towns infested with lions, which increased so rapidly that the heathen thought the God of the country had sent them as a plague. They decided to learn the worship of this God, and sent for one of the exiled priests to instruct them. At first they worshipped their heathen gods, with the true God; but, after a time, their children became very earnest believers in God, obeying the law of Moses most rigidly. They begged to be admitted among the Israelites; but the proud children of Abraham would not hear of it; every Jew was taught to hate and despise a Samaritan, or a "Cuthite"—as they were called—and so, very naturally, the Samaritans, in turn, learned to hate and despise the Jews, and each did the other all the mischief they could.

The Samaritans claimed that Mount Gerizim was holier than Mount Moriah. They believed it to be the site of the Garden of Eden, and that Adam was formed of its dust. Even to this day the few Samaritans still living show the spot where Adam's altar was supposed to stand. They thought Mount Gerizim was the mountain on which the ark rested. Every Samaritan child could point out the places on the mount where Noah came out of the ark, and where he built his altar. Abraham, according to them, offered up Isaac on Gerizim, and in the centre of the summit was the stone which served as a pillow for Jacob when he saw the vision of the angels.

The hatred between the Jews and Samaritans was so strong that neither

ever expected help of the other. When the Saviour was a boy he must have heard how the Samaritans had stolen into the temple the night before the celebration of the passover, and defiled it by strewing human bones in it. All along the border between Judea and Samaria there were constant skirmishes and raids, very much as it was in the last century between Scotland and England. No Israelite could lawfully eat even one mouthful of food that had been touched by a Samaritan. A Jew might be friendly with a heathen, but never with a Samaritan; nor need he keep his word with one. But, as the country of Samaria produced delicious fruits, the rabbis did not pronounce Samaritan fruits unclean if gathered by a Jew.

In passing from Judea to Galilee, the most direct way was through Samaria, but so much was it hated that most Jews preferred the longer route through Perea. Jesus knew no such prejudice; and, starting from Judea in the early morning, he reached Sychar about noon. Near the town was an ancient well, no doubt dug, as claimed, by Jacob's servants; and here Jesus sat down to rest while his disciples went to the village to buy bread. This well is now seventy-five feet deep, but in 1838 it was thirty feet deeper. The custom of throwing stones in the well to hear them rebound has no doubt filled it up at least one-half. While resting on the seat under the alcove of the well, with the pleasant shade of the trees all about him, a woman came to draw water. The Saviour asked her for a drink. This simple request astonished her. "How is it," she asked, "that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" The question no doubt was asked as the water was given. Jesus, having received it, tells her of a wondrous living water he can give. The woman listens wonderingly; and, feeling that this stranger is not an ordinary man, she puts to him the great question of the Samaritans, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, That in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." The way she puts the question—mentioning Jerusalem respectfully—shows that she is humble and teachable.

"Believe me," said the Lord, "an hour comes when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship God without knowing him, ignorantly. We Jews worship that which our having received the Scriptures has taught us to know. The Messiah and his salvation must come from among the Jews; but, though the Jews be right, as against the Samaritans, in so

JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

far as relates to the past, both are on equal footing as to the far more glorious future. An hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

The woman answered simply, not understanding what the Saviour meant, "I know that Messiah comes, that is called Christ. When he shall come, he shall tell us all things." Jesus answered, "I that speak unto thee am he."

The first to hear of the Saviour's birth were humble shepherds; the first person to whom the Saviour declared himself the Messiah, was a despised Samaritan.

It is not the only time that we see that Christ cared for the Samaritans and was accepted by them. The one leper out of the ten whom he healed, that returned to thank him, was a Samaritan; and in his answer to the rabbi's question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus holds up a Samaritan as "neighbor" to him who fell among thieves.

The disciples must have been greatly surprised to find their Lord talking with a woman. In Christ's time women were kept very closely, and not allowed to go out unveiled. Rabbis especially would not speak to a woman in public. The rabbis tried to keep women as ignorant as possible. "Let the words of the Law be burned rather than committed to a woman," was one saying; "He who instructs his daughter in the Law instructs her in folly," another. But Jesus came to raise woman, and treated her as the equal of man.

Strange as it must have seemed to the disciples to see the Master talking with a Samaritan woman, they already felt too much reverence for Jesus to question the right of so doing. The woman left her pitcher at the well, and hurried off to bid her friends come and see if this man were not the Christ, and soon a little crowd came toward the Saviour and his disciples. Jesus seeing them, said to his friends, "Ye say after four months will come the harvest; but I say, Look yonder at the throng coming toward us: *they* are the noblest harvest, and their coming shows that you have not to wait to reap it, as they have to reap the seed now sowing, for their souls, like autumn fields, are already white for the sickle, and how rich the reward for you my disciples who will be the reapers." The Samaritans who were brought to the well by the woman heard the Saviour gladly, and at their request he stayed with them two days, teaching them. "We believe," said the Samaritans to the woman, "not because of thy speaking, for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

It was at this time that John the Baptist was thrown into prison by Herod Antipas. Jesus, as John's friend and cousin, must have felt sorrowful at the news, and as the Bridegroom whose friend John was, He knew that John's suffering and martyrdom was but a foreshadowing of His. In the Lord's sorrow he turned for a last time to his earthly home. Dismissing his disciples for a time, he went alone to Nazareth, teaching and healing on the way. How long he rested in his mother's house is not known; no miracles marked his stay, but day by day we may be sure he was present in the synagogue, worshipping with his brethren.

The Jewish synagogue in Christ's day was a very plain building, though often built of the purest marble. On one side, as you entered, were seats for the men; on the other, behind a lattice, the women, wrapped in their long veils, sat and worshipped. At the end was the *tebhah*, or ark, of painted wood, which held the rolls of Scripture, and at one side of this was the *bîma*, an elevated seat for the reader, who was any one who had a reputation for learning and had been invited by the chief of the synagogue to take that part of the service. In the chief seats sat ten or more "men of leisure," one of them the chief of the synagogue. The *chazzan*, or "angel," was the man who had the care of the scripture rolls, handing them to the reader. After the prayers two lessons were always read, one from the Law, or books of Moses, and one from the Prophets.

On a certain Sabbath Jesus was invited to read the second lesson. He ascended the *bîma* and was handed the roll of the prophet Isaiah. How His human heart must have thrilled as He read the lesson for the day: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Closing the book, he sat down and "began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Wonderingly they listened as he spake, as never man spake, but gradually one and another murmured, "Is not this Joseph's son?"—He was but a carpenter in their eyes! Soon the murmur rose to a great cry, and with angry words they dragged him to a precipice near by to stone him for blasphemy. But he, by no miracle, but simply by the spell of his genuine goodness and truth, passed through the midst of them and went his way.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

LUKE XVIII. 10.

THE Jews, hating the Romans because they were their masters, hated any of their own people who took any public office under the conquerors. A Jew, for instance, who collected taxes was more despised than a Roman tax-collector. These publicans, as they were called, were often dishonest men; but, to the Jews, it made no difference whether they were honest or not. The publican was, especially to the Pharisee, the same as a thief or a murderer; no strict Jew would eat or talk with a publican. "Bears and lions," said a Jewish proverb, "might be the fiercest wild beasts in the forest, but publicans and informers were the worst in the cities."

But just because these men were cast out by the Jews, Jesus sought them out, and was a Friend to them. Matthew, the sixth disciple that was called, was a publican. In his delight at being chosen as a disciple he made a feast and invited his friends, who must of necessity have been publicans like himself. No doubt there were among them many dishonest men, but Jesus sat down with them.

"This man receiveth sinners," the Jews exclaimed with horror, as we do now with joy.

The Pharisee was the very opposite to the despised publican: he felt sure of heaven, claiming it as his right, for was he not the favorite of heaven? His whole time was given up to studying the traditions of the rabbis, which traditions were considered more important than the Scriptures. The words of the rabbis were held to be worth more than the words of the prophets. There were traditions among the Pharisees of miracles which they claimed to have happened to confirm the sayings of rabbis. One cried out, when his opinion was disputed, "May this tree prove that I am right!" and at once the tree was torn up by the roots and hurled an hundred ells off. But his opponents declared that a tree could prove nothing. "May this stream, then, witness for me!" cried Eliezer, and at once it flowed the opposite way. Still his opponents declared that water could

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

prove nothing. "Now," said Eliezer, "if truth be on my side may the walls of the school confirm it!" He had scarcely spoken when the walls of the school began to bow inward. The rabbi Joshua threatened them: "What is it to you if the sons of the wise dispute? You shall not fall;" and to honor rabbi Joshua the walls did not fall wholly together, but neither did they go back to their places, that the honor of rabbi Eliezer might not suffer, but remain slanting to this day. At last Eliezer called for the decision of heaven. "If I am right, let heaven witness!" Then came a voice from heaven, and said, "Why dispute ye with rabbi Eliezer? He is always right."

The Pharisee was easily known by the broad fringe to his dress, the great size of the four tassels on his tallith, and the large phylacteries, or little boxes containing scripture texts, which he wore strapped on his forehead and right arm. They prayed aloud, and took care that all should hear of any alms they gave. Some of them were sincere, devoted men—Pharisees from love to God—but, as a class, they were hypocrites, as Jesus called them, making numberless laws for the common people, and secretly breaking them themselves. One can better understand how these Pharisees bound heavy burdens on men's shoulders (as Christ said), by hearing a few of the laws which they made as to the Sabbath. "The day began at sunset on Friday and ended with sunset on Saturday; and, as the disappearance of the sun was the only mark of the time, its commencement was different on a hill-top and in a valley. If it were cloudy, the hens going to roost was the signal. The beginning and the close of the Sabbath was announced by a trumpet. All food must be prepared, all vessels washed, and all lights kindled before sunset. The money-girdle must be taken off, and all tools laid aside. On Friday, before the beginning of the Sabbath, no one must go out of his house with a needle or a pen lest he forget to lay them aside before the Sabbath opens. Every one must also search his pockets at that time to see that there is nothing left in them with which it is forbidden to go out on the Sabbath. To wear one kind of sandals was 'carrying a burden,' while to wear another kind was not. It was unlawful to go out with wooden sandals or shoes which had nails in the soles, or with a shoe and a slipper, unless one foot were hurt. It was unlawful for any one to carry a loaf on the public street; but if two carried it, it was not unlawful. The quantity of food that might be carried on the Sabbath was settled by the rabbis; it must be less in bulk than a dried

fig; if of honey, only as much as would anoint a wound; if water, as much as would make eye-salve; if ink, as much as would form two letters."

To kindle or put out a fire was to break the Sabbath. No one could give an emetic or set a broken bone on the Sabbath, or even, according to some rabbis, put back a bone that had slipped out of joint. If a person were buried under ruins he was to be left there, unless they were quite sure he was alive! The endless rules for washing and cleansing made life a real burden; even the kind of water to be used for sprinkling the hands, for dipping vessels into, and for bathing, was settled by the rabbis. Drawn water was fit for certain things, cistern water for others. Two great Pharisees argued carefully as to whether it was lawful to eat an egg that had been laid on the Sabbath. Both agreed that if the hen was kept for laying, the egg must not be touched, or even looked at; but if the hen was to be cooked and eaten, and happened to lay an egg—what then? Schammai thought a Jew might eat the egg, but Hillel decided against the egg, and he was obeyed.

No wonder the kind and merciful Saviour longed to deliver the people from such slavery. The proud and powerful Pharisees received only warnings and stern reproofs from Jesus, while the despised publicans were treated with tender sympathy.

Professor Geikie, in his "Life of Christ," gives the parable of the publican in these words:

"Two men went up at the same time, the hour of prayer, to the temple, to pray. The one was a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee, who had seen the publican enter the temple with him, stood apart, his eyes toward the Holy of Holies, and began to pray thus: 'O God, I thank thee that I do not belong to the common multitude of mankind, whom thou hast rejected—to the covetous, the unjust, the adulterous. I thank thee that I am not what so many people are, what this publican here before thee is. He knows nothing of fasting or of tithes, but I fast every Monday and every Thursday, and I give the priests and Levites the tenth, not only of all I have, but of all I may gain, which is more than the Law requires.'

"The publican, meanwhile, feeling that he was a sinner, stopped far behind the Pharisee, coming no further into the sacred court than its very edge, for he shrank from a near approach to God. Nor could he dare, in his lowly penitence,

to lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, far less his head and his hands; but, with bent head, smote on his breast in his sorrow, and said, 'God be merciful to me, the sinner.'

"The Pharisee had offered only a proud, cold thanksgiving for his own merits; the publican an humble cry for mercy. Believe me, this publican, whom the Pharisee gave a place among the unjust and impure, received favor from God, and returned to his home forgiven and accepted; but the Pharisee went away unjustified; for, as I have often said, every one who thinks highly of himself in religious things will be humbled before God, and he who humbles himself will be honored before him."

This seems the fitting place to explain the difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees were the party who wished to make and keep the Jews a *nation of priests;* the Sadducees considered the priests as separate from the common people and superior to them. The Pharisees insisted on studying and obeying the Oral Law and the Traditions, but the Sadducees held only to the Written Law, and though they reverenced and obeyed some of the Traditions, they did not hold them binding. The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the body, but they did not, as some say, deny the immortality of the soul. They were much more friendly to the heathen world about them, believing that one rule of conduct must guide them with Jews, and quite another with outsiders. The Pharisees would not allow any painting or sculpture about their dwellings, but the Sadducees admired beauty in itself and apart from religion, not believing, as did the Pharisees, that the second commandment forbids the painting or modelling of the human form, but only the worship of such painting or sculpture. The Sadducees did not hurt and worry the common people, as did the Pharisees, and indeed had little influence among the Jews; it may be it was for this reason that Jesus never entered into controversy with them. His heaviest reproaches were for the canting, selfish Pharisee.

THE SEA OF GALILEE.

JOHN VI.

A LARGE portion of the three last years of the Saviour's life was spent in Galilee, especially about the shores of its beautiful lake, or, as it is sometimes called, the Sea of Gennesareth. A very small sea it was, being only twelve miles long from north to south, and the widest part measuring but six and three-fourth miles. It is a beautiful sheet of water; and, in the Saviour's time, when its western side was crowded with villages, and the beautiful plain of Gennesareth—a spot on the west side covering about three square miles—was carefully cultivated, it must have been still more beautiful. On this plain grew wheat, barley, rice, melons, grapes, date-palms, figs, citrons, and oranges. The climate of the lake-shore is so mild that snow seldom falls in winter. The lake is so full of fish that often their fins, rippling through the water, make it look as though rain were falling. In Christ's time the sea was alive with fishing-boats, for the fish were salted in great quantities at several of the towns. Beautiful cities, like Tiberias, with its splendid palace, great arsenal, and baths that were famous all over the country, were built on the lake-shore; fishing-villages, like Capernaum and Bethsaida, with little, whitewashed stone houses, lay between, while on the east side the hills rose bare and bleak, with only about a quarter of a mile of green sward close to the lake.

Here, in those barren, treeless hills, Jesus spent many a night in prayer; praying, as we know, not only for those that were with him, but for all that should believe in him through their word, and therefore for us. Capernaum, which was just at the northern end of the plain of Gennesareth, was for a time Jesus' home, and so is called, in the Bible, his own city. Seven of his disciples, Peter, John, James, Andrew, Matthew, James the Less, and Jude, lived in Capernaum. Philip belonged to Bethsaida, which was close at hand; Nathanael was from Cana. Thomas, tradition says, was a brother of Jesus. Simon Zelotes

(or The Zealot) was from some part of Galilee, and only Judas Iscariot was from Judea.

Though not large, Capernaum was a garrison town, with a band of soldiers and a centurion in charge. This Roman centurion had learned to believe in the true God, and had built the Jews a beautiful synagogue. It was of white limestone; and though most of the stones have been carried off to build into houses, a row of columns still show what the building was—no mean gift. This centurion must have been a kindly man; for, when his slave was ill, he sent messengers to Jesus, asking that his servant might be healed. Jesus at once began to walk to the centurion's house, but a second set of messengers came to apologize for troubling the Master, and soon after the centurion himself came to Jesus and told Him that, as he himself had servants that obeyed him, he knew that Jesus had but to speak the word and He would be obeyed by those demons who had caused the disease. "When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said unto them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."

To show how full of work the Saviour's life was, we find him, the day after this, twenty-five miles southwest of Capernaum, in a little village called Nain. Crowds were following him. All along the way we may be sure the sick and lame and blind had been brought to him, and not one was refused help. But as they entered the village, a little crowd was going out that did not join the happy throng—one woman at least took no notice of any one; for her boy, the only comfort of her widowed life, was being carried to the grave. Now, as we read of what Jesus did, we must try to realize that no rabbi before him would touch or go near a dead body. He, first, in his loving pity, spoke to the mother, saying, "Weep not." Then he "touched the bier, and the bearers stood still, and he said: Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother." This village was just on the other side of the hill where Shunem stood, where, centuries before, Elisha had given another mother back her boy. No wonder the people exclaimed, when they saw what Jesus had done, "A great prophet is risen among us!"

After Jesus had been for nearly two years preaching and teaching, healing the sick and raising the dead, he sent his twelve disciples out, two by two, to

JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER.

preach the gospel (good news) of the Kingdom. We do not know how long they left him, but probably not more than a few weeks. At any rate, when he met them again at Capernaum, it was natural that they wished to be alone; but the people crowded to this wonderful Man—just as we would go now in great crowds if we heard that there was one who healed without money and without price. So Jesus and his disciples got into a little boat, and crossed the lake to the plain of Batiha. Ah, the people could not be left! They watched, and when they saw which way the boat was heading, they ran around by the shore. It was six miles by water, and about ten by land; but, when once the people had heard the Saviour talk, and seen what He could do, ten miles seemed but a little way to go to Him. In every village more joined them. They told the sick and the lame where he was. So, when the boat reached the shore, Jesus saw a great multitude gathering to hear him; "and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick." Then, sitting on the hillside, he spake unto them of the Kingdom of God, and taught them many things.

The whole day went by, and still the people waited. There was no food to be had on the lonely plain, and the Twelve begged Jesus to send the crowd away. You can fancy how surprised they were when Jesus answered: "They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat." The disciples, no doubt, looked at him in silent astonishment. At last Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said: "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many?" Ah, Jesus wanted them to do as much as they could—He would do the rest. He said: "Make the men sit down;" and so they divided the crowd into companies of fifties and hundreds. As we know, there was one happy little lad there, and no doubt there were a number of boys and even girls from the villages nearest to the plain; then, I am quite sure, as the mothers had come, there were babies. As soon as all were quiet, "Jesus took the loaves, and, having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes, as much as they would." How that little lad must have wondered as he saw what Jesus could do with his bread and fishes! I hope he never forgot the lesson. Then, after all were satisfied, Jesus had the fragments taken up (let us remember that when we are tempted to be wasteful), and they filled twelve little baskets!

As soon as they saw this miracle, the crowd began to whisper to each other

that Jesus must indeed be the Messiah. "I care not for the Pharisees," said one, "they themselves say the Messiah will, like Moses, feed Israel in the wilderness, and has not Rabbi Jesus done this?" "He is the Messiah!" "He is the Christ!" was shouted on all sides. "We need only to proclaim him king, and he will conquer our enemies the Romans, and set Israel free!"

But Jesus, telling his disciples to go to the boat and cross the lake, dismissed the crowds and "withdrew into the mountain, and was there alone," praying for those who did not know enough to pray for themselves. The disciples crossed the lake, not daring, perhaps, to wait, as they saw a storm coming. They had not started soon enough, for the storm, as furious as it was sudden, broke upon them. How they reminded each other of the night when Jesus had been asleep on a pillow, and, roused by their cry, had stilled the wind and the waves! Oh, if Jesus were only with them, they think! Then, suddenly, close to the boat, they saw, by a flash of lightning, a human form. They were terribly frightened at first, as any men would have been; but, in a moment, they heard the Master's voice, calling "It is I, be not afraid," and they knew that all would be well. Peter could not wait till Jesus should get into the boat, but called out, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee upon the waters." And Jesus said "Come." Peter, looking at the dearly loved Master, walked on the water; but all at once he looked down on the heavy waves and lost courage. He began at once to sink, for it was only his faith that had kept him up. He just had enough faith to call out, "Lord, save me!" and immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and took hold of him, and said unto him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased, and they that were in the boat worshipped him saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God!"

A LOWLY KING.

MATTHEW XXI.

It was Friday morning, the ninth Nisam, or, as we would say, March 30th, and great was the stir in Jerusalem; for the next day, being the Sabbath before the Passover, was a high day. The fields all about the city had been carefully examined and weeded; the tombs had been fenced in and white-washed, that the travellers might see them from a distance, and avoid them; for if a Jew's dress should touch a tomb he was defiled, and could not eat the passover.

At the Joppa gate the crowd was thickest; donkeys with panier's full of lentils, beans, onions, and cucumbers, brought from Galilee; camels laden with grapes, dates, figs, apples, and pomegranates, stood or knelt; men and women with stone jars and leathern bottles full of "honey of wine" and "strong drink" cried out to the passers by to stop and take a cup of liquor; pedlars of cooking utensils, wearing apparel, ointments, singing-birds, and jewelry jostled one another; while animals of all kinds—donkeys, horses, calves, sheep, kids, and camels, swine only excepted—stood waiting purchasers. Passing through the market were Roman soldiers in shining breastplates and skirts of mail, and gladiators with sleeveless tunics reaching to their knees, who had been brought to the Holy City by Herod, and were hated by the Jews. Suddenly the people made way for a Jewish-looking man; his mantle was of snow-white linen; his robe richly embroidered and belted at the waist by a red sash with heavy gold fringe. The crowd seemed to dread his touch—was he a leper? No, but in the eyes of the Jews as bad, for he was a Samaritan, and his touch was pollution. Next came a figure whom all looked at with reverence; his head was bowed, his eyes fixed on the ground; but every now and then he stopped, crossed his hands upon his breast, and looked up to heaven as if praying. A leathern box (or phylactery) was tied on his forehead and another on his left arm; a deep fringe hung from the borders of his robe,

CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

and enormous tassels at the four corners of his tallith. He was a Pharisee, a Jewish Rabbi, whose word was law with the common people.

But let us hear of what these two are talking: the mother, her veil covering all but her nose and mouth, sells wine; the boy is almost a man, yet he sits idle at her feet. Ah, no wonder, for he is blind! "Mother," says the boy, "what think you, will He come to the feast?" "It is what all are asking, my son; the rabbis, who say the Nazarene has a devil, and does all his great deeds by the devil's aid——" "Say not so," interrupted the boy, passionately, "did not Joachim tell us only last Sabbath that he is the Messiah?" "True, my Simeon, and I said not he was aught else. I did but tell thee what the rabbis say, and we must not forget that our friend Joachim has been cast out of the synagogue." "Ah, mother, he minds not that! the Nazarene—our Messiah—has seen and blessed him; but if Rabbi Jesus should come to the feast, you will bring me to him? You promise?" "Simeon, can you ask me! I have not your strong faith in the Nazarene; but, if he come, you shall reach him, and may the God of our fathers grant your prayer."

Just then the mother was called to serve a customer, and the blind boy sat unnoticed; again and again he went over the story of how his friend had asked sight of Jesus, and over and over he whispered the prayer, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." How his heart swelled with rapture as he thought that before many days he too might hear the gracious words, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Everywhere, in the temple-courts where rich tapestries were being hung in honor of the feast, in the different synagogues, and in the Roman palaces, people questioned, "Will He come to the feast?" The lame, the sick, the blind, longed for His coming. The priests and Pharisees, who hated Him, plotted for His life. His disciples would have kept Him back; but steadily Jesus came toward the Holy City, and on the afternoon of that Friday entered Bethany, which was one of the suburbs of Jerusalem. The Sabbath was spent at Bethany; and, though many of the sick came to be healed, Simeon and his mother did not hear, till late at night, that the Prophet of Nazareth had really come. Simeon wanted to start at once; but his mother told him it would not do to trouble the Master after nightfall. "Let me sell my wine," she said, "for an hour or two in the morning, and then, if he pass not through the gate, we will go to Bethany." So the blind boy waited as patiently as he could.

Early on the next day Simeon and his mother took their stand at the gate now called St. Stephen's, leading into the new part of Jerusalem. Flags and banners floated from the houses, in honor of the Passover. Simeon took no heed of what was going on around him; his ears were strained to catch any word of his coming. At last he hears the chanting of a psalm. Soon others hear it, and Simeon catches such sentences as these: "Such a crowd are coming! They are waving palm-branches!" "Hark! hear what they sing:

"Tell ye the daughter of Zion,
Behold thy King cometh unto thee
Meek, and riding upon an ass,
And upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

"See, see! there sits the One of whom they sing!" And all crowd to see Jesus riding in the midst of His followers. As the crowd pour through the gates, Simeon and his mother are pressed to the wall. "Who is this?" ask the people; and proudly the crowd of Galilean pilgrims shout, "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth, in Galilee."

The wine bottles are left with a friend, and Simeon and his mother join the crowd which sweeps on even to the temple gates. There Jesus, dismounting, enters; for, having ridden, he needs but to take off his sandals. Simeon and his mother, who are strict in their obedience to the law, cannot follow till they have washed their feet. But, after a time, they too stand in the Court of the Women, and hear, with beating hearts, the very children singing, "Hosanna, hosanna to the Son of David!"

Standing there, his wonderful face beaming with love and pity, Jesus receives all who would ask aught of him. Now it is a mother, who brings her children to be blessed by the Master; his disciples know better than to hinder her, for had not Jesus said, "Suffer the little ones to come unto me?" So each child receives a blessing, and the mother goes away with a light heart. Again, it is a lame man, or a paralytic, or a daughter tormented by evil spirits—each one is granted what he asks, and remains to give thanks.

"Jesus, Son of David! Jesus, Son of David!" It is Simeon—his mother has brought him as near as she can; and, in his earnestness, he is crying louder than he need. "What wilt thou?" says a gentle voice at his side, and Simeon forgets

all else in his desire to see the One who speaks. "O that I might see thee!" he cries. And immediately comes the answer, "Be of good courage, behold me." "My Lord and my God!" Simeon exclaims, as he looks up into that face, which is the "chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely."

"Hosanna, hosanna to the Son of David!" sing the children. The chief priests and Pharisees, who have been standing aloof, push the common people aside, and say angrily to Jesus, "Hearest thou what these are saying?" With a smile of love for the little ones, taking one little happy child in his arms as he speaks, the Saviour answered quietly, "Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" And the Pharisees dare not answer.

The whole day was spent in works of mercy. "The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them." In the evening he went back to Bethany, returning on Monday morning to cleanse the temple of the money-changers and of those that sold doves. No doubt that day was passed in acts of mercy; but we have no record. Tuesday morning he again entered the temple courts—for the last time. The chief priests sent to know by what authority he had cleansed the temple the day before, but Jesus only answered by asking them whether the baptism of John was from heaven or of men. The Pharisees would not answer "from heaven;" they dared not answer "of men," for the common people fairly worshipped the memory of the Baptist. "Neither," answered Jesus, "tell I thee by what authority I do these things." But he did not let them go without one more warning. The parable of the two sons, one of whom said, "I go," and went not, and the other, who, having refused, yet afterward obeyed, and the story of the man that let his vineyard out to husbandmen who slew his servants and even his own son, were both addressed to the priests and Pharisees, and they felt the reproof Jesus meant to give. In their anger they tried to arrest him; but the people closed about him, and they could not touch him. But the arrest was only put off—the priests knew well that they would conquer in the end, and Jesus knew (what they did not) which of his own disciples would betray him into their hands.

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